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Little Mouse: A Journey
The Making of a Picture-book Artwork

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MPhil
University of Edinburgh
2017

DECLARATION

By signing this declaration I certify that:

This thesis was composed only by myself.

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The author

Ching-Yu Chang

Abstract

The picture book is an artistic medium is part of literature, especially of children's literature. This discussion of the picture book extends to the dynamic between author and illustrator, and interactions between the verbal and the visual, as described by contemporary researchers, such as Maria Nikolajeva, Lawrence R. Sipe, and Carole Scott. Most of them were not picture book creators, so the voice of the picture book's creator is easily overlooked. To fill the gap between the researcher and the creator, this project explores the creative process of the picture book by studio-art research.

This project is concerned with the creation process of a picture book, presenting a coherent overview of an approach to creating an artist's picture book, especially in the idea of development through both visual and narrative by two methods: research and practice. This thesis demonstrates my framework of creating an artistic picture book, *Little Mouse*. Chapter one discusses the methodology of the studio-art research, compares practical-led research and practical-based research, and identifies my multicultural background, to set the foundation of this project. In Chapter two, I applied a part of practical-led methodology to adapt and transfer a range of sources from history, theory, literature and popular culture to build up and enhance the depth of my concept of *Little Mouse*, which encompasses and analyses my core interest - a life-changing journey. Chapter three discusses how I applied practical-based methodology to reflect the progress of the practical work of making *Little Mouse*, particularly focusing on how framed a fiction story, and discussing step by step my approach to illustration practice. In the last chapter, I tested my potential readers to review whether my work succeeded in communicating and delivering my visual research in the form of my finished book.

This project hybridizes multicultural sources to form a contemporary picture book which blurs the boundaries between illustrator/writer and reality/fiction. This also provides a case study of the picture book for bridging research and picture book's creator and demonstrates a process of understanding and interpreting creative activities.

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Preface:

Research Methodology of *Little Mouse*

Little Mouse is a piece of ‘studio-art research’¹ by research ‘in’ and ‘through’ practical art works (Van Gelder and Baetens, 2009, p. 102). James Elkins, a scholar of art criticism, history, and theory, has indicated that the interdisciplinary methodology, ‘studio-art research’, provides a bridge to link multiple subjects to form a new model. In his article, The Three Configurations of Studio-Art PhDs, he proposed three basic models of art doctoral research. Within this perspective, the project of *Little Mouse* fits one of his models - ‘research and artwork comprise a new interdisciplinary field’ (2009a, pp. 145–156). This type of research aims to break the boundaries between disciplines and to draw on different academic subjects, such as anthropology, sociology, art history and practice. Elkins proposes that it is not suitable to use the term, ‘new knowledge’, to state the output of ‘Studio-Art PhDs’. Instead, it can be replaced by the term ‘new theory’ (Elkins, 2009b, pp. 116–119), the process of making key point of studio-art research is to use art and design for getting more understanding as a focus to provide new kinds of cognitive (Elkins, 2009b, pp. 116–124).

There are debates among academics around the essential value and the research of the Doctorate in the Art and Design (Burgin, 2009, pp. 71–78; Mottram, 2009, p. 3; Wilson, 2009, p. 69). According to Hilde Van Gelder and Jan Baetens, more and more art higher education

¹ Studio-Art mostly is used by American Education in art, and widely describes the art practice and research from artist in the studio. In UK, its definition is similar to practical research.

institutions, such as the Royal College of Art and the University of Art and Design in Helsinki, support the idea that *'a doctorate in arts is no longer necessarily 'practice-based' in the sense that it should be aiming at and ultimately amount to the production of a work of art'* (2009, p. 107). In terms of discussion of the content of the PhD thesis of art and design, it is inevitable that many academics continue to debate around practice-led research and practice-based research, according to their different 'modes of perception' (Klein, 2010, p. 4) of the creative process for artists; especially they debated the distinction between practice-led research and practice-based research.

Coumans explains that practice-led research is designed, *'for problem to solution, that is the point of departure for the rhetoric research direction of the thesis...The research direction of an artist/designer—other than the art and design process—is a transparent process in which conscious steps are taken, in which knowledge is used, or knowledge is searched for and articulated in the process'* (2003, pp. 65–66). Artists and designers produce knowledge by consciously discussing their research directions. In 2003, the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK more specifically described practice-led research as:

a distinctive feature of the research activity in the creative and performing arts [which] it involves the identification of research questions and problems, but the research methods, contexts and outputs then involve a significant focus on creative practice. This type of research thus aims, through creativity and practice, to illuminate or bring about new knowledge and understanding, and it results in outputs that may not be text-based, but rather a performance (music, dance, drama), design, film, or exhibition. (2003, p. 10)

On the other hand, practice-based research values the process of building the creation itself. Christopher Frayling, an educationalist, argued that practice-based research emphasizes the

characteristics of construction, so the originality of the artwork, the mastery of the artist and the knowledge produced are expressed in the creation (1997, p. 14). Linda Candy describes research as '*an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice.*' She suggests that practice-led research should be concerned with 'the nature of practice' and lead to '*new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice*'² (2006, p. 1). Biggs and Buchler, argued that the contribution of practice-based research can be theoretical or practical and '*can pertain to skills, or an embodied and/or personal way as part of personal experience, etc.*' (2008, p. 10).

There are many similarities between these two methodologies. Both describe the activity of artists who explore a core concern, transfer it into creative expression and communicate their ideas through the artwork (Malins and Gray, 1995, p. 3). This process creates artwork, and the artist documents the process; all together this becomes the evidence and material for research (Harper, 2011, p. 14). The major difference is the artist's attitude toward the project. Basically, practice-led research focuses on the impact of the output during the practical process. That means the key point of producing the knowledge is through the process of debating the relationship between creation and research which surrounds the 'centre of human activity' (Harper, 2011, p. 11). Practice-led research focuses on an art experiment: the main purpose is to solve the artist's question. The definition of practice-based is more ambiguous, it indicates that the research is the practical work itself, focusing on the process of creation which obtains information/data for the artist to investigate and from which to acquire more understanding. Taking the creation of a picture book with the theme of 'lost' as an example, practice-led

² The 'new knowledge' here Linda Candy suggested, is in my comprehension more like 'understanding' and 'interpretation' knowledge instead of actually producing 'new knowledge'.

research focuses on exploring the subject of 'being lost', practice plays the role of helping the artist to develop the idea of 'being lost'; on the other hand, practice-based research pays attention to the reflection of the practice itself, which focuses on how to complete a picture book narrating the experience of 'being lost'. They are different in the 'something of the same way in which art and design practice are different' (Nimkulrat, 2007a, p. 2).

As a picture-book creator and researcher, I agree that these two methodologies with different 'modes of perception' have their own territory, and both of them could be applied and contribute to one single project, as in my picture-book creation research, from the stage of exploration to narrative and visual art practice. We should be aware that many creative activities twist both of them together, and it is hard to classify into any visual creative project as involving one of them, as James Elkins has pointed out. Therefore, rather than practice-led and practice-based research, I adopt 'studio-art' research methodology since it has a broader definition to cover my whole research project. I will mix and rely on a combination of both methodologies in the project: practice-led research to explore the subject; practice-based research to expand on the practical knowledge I learn from the work. I prefer to apply the principles of practice-led and practice-based research methodology according to the needs of different stages of the research, instead of following one of them entirely.

I started my research from the perspective of studio-art research, in the space or territory between the artist and the scholarly researcher. George Smith proposed a metaphor for this difference (2009, p. 91): artist as worker, who currently practices art and makes art works; and scholar as thinker, who puts effort into reading, reflecting writing and publishing. I see the studio-art researcher as a kind of 'artist-philosopher', who might re-connect thinking and practice. On the one hand, my project reveals the 'black box' of the complex creative process

from my own experience; on the other hand, it demonstrates visual and narrative experiment that applies theories and concepts to practice.

With this perspective, I proposed my research frame as an experiment moving constantly between research and the practice of my picture book (See Table 0-1). From my actual creation experience of picture-book *Little Mouse*, I found that there were seven main stages of the creative process. This thesis reveals the most crucial parts of them to provide first-hand experience - even my self-reflection - as deeper share of the art work for readers, but as James Elkins argued not to produce ‘new knowledge’ or directly ‘problem-solve’ (2004, p. 24). In Table 0-1, I listed different methodologies in each chapter to shape the creative process of *Little Mouse*.

Table 0-1

Research structure, methodology, and stages of Picture-book creative process

	Research Methodology	Stages of Picture-book creative process
Chapter 2	Practice-led Research	Stage 1: Idea exploration Stage 2: Material collect and transformation
Chapter 3	Practice-based Research	Stage 3: Background settings: fictional/ secondary world Stage 4: Storyboard Stage 5: Media Stage 6: Design picture Book
Chapter 4	Action Research	Stage 7: The audience

Each subsequent chapter explains a different approach, corresponding to the seven stages in my picture-book creation-research project. But first, in Chapter One, I begin by locating possible research methodology for the practice/research in the picture-book, and introducing

the whole project.

Chapter Two explains how I adapted practice-led research to develop my main theme for *Little Mouse*: how my story was shaped from my experience and the theories on which I drew. This chapter applies a ‘thick description’ by Clifford Geertz of understanding and interpretation in researching the picture book and the cultural experience which informs it, and is embodied in it. From the thinking of Homi K. Bhabha who discussed postcolonial culture such as I experienced, from Steven Vertovec who explored the idea of the transnational journey, and from multicultural production, such as picture books, manga, comics, graphic novels, and animation, I reviewed my visual and narrative sources. The research which ensued offers a case study to support future practitioners and researchers to understand the development of ideas in order to create a picture book. Also, as a visual artist, this chapter shows how multicultural experiences benefited this creator, to enhance my creativities visually and conceptually.

In Chapter Three, I discuss how I turned my ‘mode of research’ into practiced-based, as an artist rather than a book designer, reflecting on my practical activities to increase my understanding of the whole creative process. It reveals the visual elements and the thinking behind the creative process of the picture book (Gray and Malins, 2004, p. 22), for instance, Vladimir Propp, literature on fantasy, and the theory of secondary world. This chapter offers the creator of the picture book, as a possible sustainable framework, my reflections on the step by step approach of making a picture book.

Chapter Four shows my experiments in further communication with potential audiences, by direct contact at exhibitions of the work and through a questionnaire survey. The feedback

gained enabled me to reflect on and rethink aspects of my picture-book creation as a finished work. This feedback process was valuable for me to understand the possible reactions of my potential readers and whether my intentions during the creative process had been delivered.

Chapter 1

The Origins of *Little Mouse*

1.1 Introduction: *Little Mouse*

Little Mouse is a picture book research project based on my practical work and expressing my research interest - the life-changing journey- an exploration process of negative emotion. This project combines two strands of work: theoretical and practical research, which complement each other. I used cultural research to develop the ‘content’ and the ‘expression’ of the picture book in two specific ways: the idea of the story, and the visual art practice for my book *Little Mouse*. In creating both kinds of content *Little Mouse*, I gathered source material from various places and used them to form and deepen for a fictional story. The story contains my research into life experience expressed as a modern fantasy about a spiritual journey, in response to a contemporary dilemma of human life: how people deal with their own worst or most negative self and learn to change it. C. G. Jung (1875- 1961) used ‘shadow’ as a metaphor for the dark side of the modern human being which contains immoral and unsocial characteristics. Here, I adapt his term ‘shadow’ as a metaphor for internalised negative emotion or thought. Thinking of my area of interest in this way helped me to see how to visualise and dramatize it. What would happen if one could meet one’s shadow? Where could this happen? In terms of ‘expression’, I explored by practice the formation of an artistic picture book, adapting the ‘content’ I discussed, visualizing it into images, and integrating the text into a picture book.

I accomplished this project basically by integrating both psychological theories and

contemporary traditions and genre in popular literature to articulate my personal system of ideas and apply the result as my practical work. The process was flexible. Sometimes, I drew an image and developed the story from it, then, went back to research the best materials to use. At other times, I began from theories to establish a framework and attempted to illustrate it. This thesis documents the research process and debates the ideas emerging from the research. Here, I explore inward how I, as an artist constructed a framework for creating a philosophical picture book.

1.2 Motivation

The picture book has been one crucial part of literature research, especially with regard to children's literature. In the present day, discussions of the picture book usually deal with the dynamic between author and illustrator, and the interaction between the verbal and the visual; as in the writings of contemporary researchers, such as Maria Nikolajeva, Carole Scott, Lawrence R. Sipe, and others. Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott focused on the interaction of the complex communications between text and image in the picture book. Lawrence R. Sipe proposed that the relationship of text-picture is a 'semiotic concept of trans-mediation'. However, most of these researchers were not picture book creators, so lacked first hand experience of the thought processes of picture book creation, and this issue became crucial when I tried to explore the creative process further. Some researchers noticed this issue. For example, Martin Salisbury published the practical guide book *Illustrating Children's Books* for creators. This work provided a general framework for picture-book creation, focusing on the rules of publication. However, it did not explore in detail development process of creating the picture book and the reflection of the artist arising from it, from idea gathering to the physical work, and that is what this thesis is interested in. To explore this issue, the research

processes of the development and creation of *Little Mouse*, a picture book artwork. I intended to consider mysteries around the creation process and to attend in depth to the conceptual development of a picture book.

As a visual artist, I am particularly concerned with human psychology; I visualize my observations of human behaviour in response to the environment in which I live. The idea of *Little Mouse* originates first with my move from Taiwan to Edinburgh. This move was accompanied with mixed emotions, such as excitement, anxiety, insecurity, isolation and loneliness. This inspired me to explore how these psychological feelings inside human beings affects individuals and how human beings might react towards them. The visual transfer and response toward life difficulties became an urge to convey as an artist.

I like to use my visual imagination to reflect my cognition of the world in which I live; so I turn friends into specific characters, change ordinary objects into more extraordinary ones, or mix new experiences of the landscape into a new world. As the illustrator-artist Shaun Tan¹ (1974-) said in 2002, these are ‘childish’ play activities, but this process arouses my creativity of ideas and feelings: what would these be like if they became visual? And when these images form a story, what would it tell? (Tan, 2012, p. 2). This ‘childish’ action produced my base concept of *Little Mouse*, as a parable which reflects my curiosity about the foreign place, Edinburgh. Imagining a suitable fictional world became an important part of my first year in

¹ Shaun Tan born in Australia in 1974. His father was an immigrant from Malaysia and his mother was Australian. From his teens, he illustrated science fiction novels and also drew horror illustrations for magazines. He has published many works, such as *The Viewer*, *The Rabbits*, *The Lost Thing*, *The Red Tree*, *The Arrival* and *Tales from Outer Suburbia*. In 2007, he was granted a World Fantasy Award.

Edinburgh.

I am particularly interested in fantasy stories. I usually pick up metaphoric messages from folklore, fairy tales and stories to link to my own experience. I like to put myself in the shoes of character so-called a 'villain' in such stories, trying to understand his/her psychological movement through developing the plot. Therefore, during the first year in Edinburgh, I rewrote two fairy tales, *Little Red Riding Hood* in the version by Charles Perrault (1628-1703) and *Auntie Tiger*, a Chinese folktale. and I recreated each story with illustrations from the perspective of the villainous characters: the wolf, and Auntie Tiger. These stories, 'Little Red and I' and 'Auntie Tiger' brought to the fore my questions about loneliness and identify in the relationship of the individual and the outside world. From the perspective of my 'villain characters' Auntie Tiger and Mr. Wolf, I analyzed these fairy stories and explored the psychological background of the negative roles. After working on the project of *Little Red and I* and *Auntie Tiger*, I found that I was looking for more explanations for the characters of these fairy tale villains: could they be portrayed in a way which would make us feel some compassion for them? So I turned my research to human psychology behind the 'darkness of desire' and the dynamic of repressed emotion looking at examples from religion, psychology, art and literature all dealing with, as I saw it, the 'shadow if the self'. How can we visualise and so face the monster of darkness which is produced from within the self? This issue is dealt with, for example, in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's progress* (1678), C. G. Jung's theory 'Individuation', the fable of first laid out in his *Symbols of Transformation: An analysis of the prelude to a case of schizophrenia* (1962), *Ten Cow Herding* in Zen Buddhism, and the fantasy tale by Ursula Le Guin (1929-), *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968). I will return to each of these as formal models for my work in chapter two.

I am fascinated by the ways in which stories can explore life experience. For example, Murray Stein, the Jungian analyst, interpreted the imagery of the fairy tale *The White Snake* as ‘symbols of transformation’ to experience the process of individuation (1963, p. 221). ‘The White Snake’ narrates the story of a servant who acquired the ability to understand the language of animals. He left his familiar environment and went to a whole new world. His life changed, everything became possible. He was not only a servant; he could be who he wanted to be. During the journey, he saved fish and ants and he sacrificed his horse to feed the ravens. In return for his kindness, the animals helped the servant to overcome the tasks set by the princess and he was able to marry her. This journey is full of challenges: if this servant did not complete the princess’s demands, he would have lost his life (Stein, 2006, pp. 65–87). Susan Rowland, a Jungian scholar, suggested that the art of the story contains cross-cultural language:

where the imagination is released, in whatever culture and whatever form, use the psychic resources that Jung terms ‘symbol’ and ‘myth’ in developing image and narrative. Hence there is a cross-cultural or perhaps pan-cultural argument about the function of symbolic forms that draw on a sense of mystery, of unknown or unknowable depths of being. However, there are also large ‘stories’ or narrative forms that shape the consciousness of specific cultural traditions.
(2011, p. 3)

These particular individuation stories are created based on the culture of the creator. My story of *Little Mouse* is a metaphor which contains a main story idea but has multiple levels. I decided to create a picture book to combine my interests and explore how to form a piece of artistic research from two directions: visualisation and narration.

1.3 Picture Book

1.3.1 Attraction of Picture-book

As an artist, I am experienced in using visual material and at reviewing the work arising from this process to demonstrate my thought processes. However, I am never satisfied with my creative process and always wish to push the boundaries further. During the process of PhD study, my interest changed towards the creation of picture books: how to write a story and create the illustrations to accompany it and which reflected my feelings and life experience. The production of a picture book is far more difficult than the creation of the purely visual artworks that I had made previously. This is because a picture book challenges an artist to handle multidisciplinary aspects, such as the idea behind the concept, the text, the visual art, the plot, and also the graphic design².

For centuries, human beings have chosen pictures with text as one of the vehicles to express cultural ideas. The prototype of the picture-book can be traced from the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave in southern France, from Egyptian papyrus rolls, parchments, and ancient clay tablets to Chinese scrolls and clay pots. These are the earliest works which combine pictures first with symbols and then with words. In the Middle Ages, the picture book was a work of art, used by clergy and upper class people (Kiefer, 2008, pp. 14–15). Between the 15th and 18th century, there were many technological improvements in printmaking and paper. The audience and function of Western picture book use became much wider, for example chapbooks were made for adults from the late 16th century on (Feaver, 1977, pp. 7–8).

² I am aware that the graphic design of the book is the area I focused least strongly on, for reasons of limited time, and also because I framed this as an art project, rather than as a commercial design project.

However, after the 18th century the majority of picture books came to be written for children, such as those by George Cruikshank (1792- 1878), Edward Lear (1812-1888), and Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832–1898). These creators established the roots of the children’s picture book and saw it flourish (Feaver, 1977, p. 10). In the 19th century, the printmaker, Edmund Evans (1826-1905), used colour printmaking into the illustrations of *In Fairyland* by Richard Doyle (1824-1883). Walter Crane (1854-1915) and Kate Greenaway (1846-1901) adapted nursery rhymes and songs into picture books, and they started to consider the combination of text and picture (Kiefer, 2008, pp. 15–17).

Throughout the 20th century, the production of picture books grew enormously. As a child, I was greatly inspired by many of them. For example, I read the work of British children’s writer and illustrator, Beatrix Potter (1886-1943), who created *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902), and used an anthropomorphic character, Peter Rabbit, as the protagonist to extend her narrative. The American picture-book creator, Maurice Sendak (1928-2012), created *Where The Wild Things Are*, which was one of my favourite monster stories. The series of *Echo of Chinese Fairy Tales* (漢聲中國童話), a collection of Chinese fairy tales accompanied by a series of illustrations published by Echo Publishing in 1983, was my usual choice for my bed time story. When I became an adult I still enjoyed reading picture books, such as *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick, *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, *One Pizza, One Penny* by Giuliano Ferri. Manga for example, *Naruto* by Kishimoto Masashi, *Bleach* by Kubo Taito, and *Death Note* illustrated by Obata Takeshi were important picture books in my collection on my book shelf. (see Chapter Two)

Maria Nikolajeva (1952-), the contemporary scholar of narrative theory, considers that

contemporary picture book research is divided between two main disciplines: the history of art and children's literature (2008, p. 56). But picture book research by artists mostly focuses on the dynamic of text and picture, form, and colour. Contemporary picture book artists often use the pictures to contrast with the text, or they use minimal or no text. Nikolajeva and Scott indicated that '*contemporary picture-books often make us aware of the conventionality of language by focusing on the incompatibility of verbal statements and their visual correspondence*' (2001, p. 217). My focus here is on the case where the artist and writer are one person, the picture book creator, as in the case of Saint-Exupéry, Sendak and Tan. Contemporary picture-book research seldom discusses the creative process and the thought within that process. This process reveals the dynamic between the inspiration behind the story and the development of in the visual artwork. In my experience, when I need new inspiration for a story, creating a piece of visual artwork which dramatises the character in the story is helpful. The artwork may open a new possibility for the story. On the other hand, the text also can always provide me with new visual ideas and help me to create a convincing world, as can the dynamic which is established when the text and the image are put together on the same page. As Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott asserted, the rhythm between the words and pictures is one of the important characteristics in the picture book (2000, p. 226).

I chose a picture-book as the final expression of my work because picture books combine inseparable text and illustration to convey a concept together and communicate with each other (Bader, 1976, p. 1; Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001, p. 1; Saadani and Sheikhzadeh, 2012, p. 43). Unlike animation and film, a picture book cannot flow automatically. It requires active participation from the viewer, and so leaves room for both the reader and creator to free the imagination. The merit of using the picture book as a medium is that it provides the clues for the reader to develop the necessary 'decoding skills' and enhances the reader's imagination

(Stanton, 1998, p. 2). Picture books are shaped by culture, history, society (Sipe and Pantaleo, 2008, p. 1). As Goldstone argued, '*it is in the nature of picture books to be cultural artifacts reflecting societal morals, values, and beliefs*' (Goldstone, 2008, p. 117). Besides, the dynamic between the text and image increases various effects of the picture book (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2000, pp. 229–232).³ Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles offered evidence in *Children Reading Pictures* that young readers develop intellectual growth by reading picture books. Also, picture books are easily accepted by older pupils and used in learning (2002, pp. 27–28). For centuries, picture books were created for certain purposes, such as education, cultural development and marketing needs. For me, creating a picture book is like working on multiple art activities perhaps like organizing a symphony, where the music comes from various instruments. I have to develop different aspects, techniques, skills and knowledge, and moreover, have to learn how to organize these seamlessly into one work. In responding to these challenges, I had to improve many different skills and abilities in order to complete the complex artistic form of the picture book. In this project, I propose picture book as a secular adult art form, artistic creations in their own right; a pure art work with a time-based creation process.

1.3.2 My Ideal Picture-book

A key model for my ideal picture book art form is *The Little Prince* (1943) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944); short, parable-like story with water-colour illustrations by the author. From its first edition, *The Little Prince* impressed readers with its humanistic narration. It narrates a 'philosophical journey' through a conversation between two charming characters,

³ Pamela Protheroe (1947-), a scholar of English literature, disagreed: she argued that the picture book harms improvement of reading skills and delays intellectual development (1992, pp. 8–10).

the little prince and the pilot (Munakata, 2005, p. 40). Two other works of Saint-Exupéry, *Wind, Sand and Stars* (1939) and *Night Flight* (1931), give details which allow us to decode and understand how he distilled his life experience into *The Little Prince*. In his memoir, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, Saint-Exupéry narrated his reflection on the question of life and death, and on the catastrophe he experienced on crashing his plane in the desert; in his novel, *Night Flight*, he described the experience of early pilots and their inward struggle between danger and duty through the protagonist Rivière. As a French pilot in the early days of aviation, his flights took him into an immense diverse world of exotic cultures and he flew over many of the bizarre landscapes of the earth (Bunkse, 1990, p. 97). At the outbreak of World War Two, Saint-Exupéry joined the French Airforce and, until the French-German armistice, flew in areas of conflict. Through his experience, he came to realize how small and unimportant human beings can be and to understand the fragility of life (Fay, 1947, p. 92). In *The Little Prince*, Saint-Exupéry emphasized the importance of ‘relationships’ among the rose, the fox, the snake, the pilot, and the Little Prince (Cowles, 1997, p. 57).

As a man of the mid 20th century, Saint-Exupéry’s reflection on life as a human being was full of doubt and questions (Bunkse, 1990, p. 99). Compared to the period of World War II, we live in a different era; however, *The Little Prince* contributes to fascinate contemporary readers, it was adapted into film in 2015. I think one reason for its popularity is that the double layers of the story can be interpreted into suitable meanings for now: the speeding up of urban life leaves little time for reflection, and distanced social networks often take the place real relationships. When I read *The Little Prince* as a child, these mysterious characters and the magical world it described fascinated me. When I reached teenage years, this story inspired me to think about its dialogue in a new way. After many years, I read *The Little Prince* again. I found it is a story which invite us to see our personal life issues. Every time I reread *The Little Prince*, I discover

different aspects of its story: each character has its own unique attitude towards life and relationships, each has a perspective from which to understand the world, and makes me reflect on one's own difficulties. Clearly, this apparently simple story has deeper meanings behind it, and invites reading as a parable of life issues (Cowles, 1997, p. 57).

Given the different effect of reading it as different ages, *The Little Prince* can be a parable of different periods in life. It breaks the boundaries of readers' ages and successes and arouses wide discussions. As Maria Nikolajeva and Scott pointed out,

While many of the works that have drawn the attention of critics fascinated by the dual-audience or cross-audience phenomenon offer opportunities for intricate analysis of narrative technique, perspective, symbolism, and characterization, we believe that picturebooks provide a special occasion for a collaborative relationship between children and adults, for picturebooks empower children and adults much more equally. (2001, p. 261)

This model seems close to the aims of my project.

The work of the contemporary picture book creator Shaun Tan (1974-), offers another prototype for me. Shaun Tan is a part-Chinese, Malaysian, Irish and English writer / illustrator from Perth, West Australia. Growing up he met many challenges; for example, his yellow skin made him an outsider in school. In *The Arrival* (2006), Tan broke the form of picture books and narrated a story without any text. He depicted the story of an immigrant who experienced bewilderment, panic, surprise, nostalgia and feelings of loneliness in an unfamiliar land; he met difficulties in communication, finding his direction and struggled to survive. It was inspired by the immigration experience of his father's generation, so some visual images in this books allude to Australia in the 1960s (Ling, 2008, p. 45; Ommundsen, 2009, pp. 223–224). Shaun Tan uses character types drawn from fantasy- dragons, giants and small hybrid creatures- to express ideas and feelings. He writes,

Like all artists and writers, I'm interested in finding something universal in the particular: how any small scene might stand for something else, and be translated back into the common currency of emotion. (2014, p. 10)

From *The Arrival* brilliantly depicts the protagonist's feelings of loss, insecurity, and anxiety. As a second-generation immigrant, Shaun Tan turns the experience of the immigrant into a life-changing journey, and transferred it into a series of illustrations to express the hero's struggle. He created a wonderland based on realistic images of the modern city, everyday objects and food, and added fantasy creatures into this world. For me, the dream-like atmosphere he created was not far away from reality.

So, the final production of this project is a picture book drawing on the traditions established by *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, who both created visual art and story by themselves. Andrew Stibbs claimed that art has the 'ability to shock and inspire, to change vision, ideas and feelings' (1998, p. 201). Kevin S. Reimer and James L. Furrow think that, '*language provides access to spiritual processes of thought and experience that are potentially co-constructed between the individual and his/her context*' (2001, p. 10). As an artist, the process of creating *Little Mouse*, required me to combine picture and text, to 'challenge experience' (Pike, 2002, p. 9), and find a set of images to express my life-changing journey.

1.4 Research Aims and Project Scope

1.4.1 Research Aims

This artistic research project contains two main parts, a picture book, and a thesis containing evidence in relation to the making of this story. I focus on describing my the creative process, and explaining how I synthesised well-recognized visual and cultural evidence from a range of sources to develop my creative ideas (Harper, 2011, p. 6). As a picture book creator, I respond to a psychological issue by making visual images and story-telling. The aims and objectives of this artistic research project are:

- (1) To explore how I created an artistic picture book and how I went about the process of creation.
- (2) To explore how a contemporary artist develops and transfers both ideas and cultural sources into a picture book artwork.

So there are several lands of journey referred to here: my own journey as a creator, and the journey expressed in *Little Mouse*.

1.4.2 Project Scope

Research debates on the contemporary picture books. Focus on the relationship of author-illustrator, image and text interaction, market and customer base (Berridge, 1980, pp. 21–28; Nikolajeva and Scott, 2000, pp. 225–238; Sipe, 1998, pp. 97–108; Tan, 2001, pp. 3–10; Wolfenbarger and Sipe, 2007, pp. 273–280). But I must confess that I entered the project and engineered it as a purely artistic project which ‘*can be elevated to an art form which has increasing potential for conveying complex mental states*’ (Nikolajeva, 2008, p. 72); not

putting educational or commercial purpose as my primary concern. As an artist, I believe the creator him/herself should be moved by the work, then it may have possibilities to touch others. Elizabeth C. Hirschman shared a similar concept in 1983: she believed that the self-oriented creator creates art expressing her/his emotion and values first. The audience may then accept and be moved by their artwork (1983, p. 47); but the creator is his/her first audience. Shaun Tan argued that '*any work of art finds its own audience, inviting them to make what they will of this or that idea*' (2001). An artist must focus on his/her creation first, making it on 'ideal' expression, then considers the other questions after. I am aware that this artwork originates from my question, how to deal with the darkness of the self; *Little Mouse* is not like a mainstream picture-book project, which is commercially driven, since neither readers nor the market were my first consideration during my creation. This project encompasses my interest in how to understand and produce psychological monsters within a picture book: in *Little Mouse*, my visual character, Shadow Monster, is a metaphor of psychological darkness. I handled visual and theoretical evidence to frame my knowledge of my working methods as an artist. When I reached the final stage of creating *Little Mouse*, I was aware that I had communicated with the external world and talked with 'the child within' (Salisbury, 2008, p. 36).

I would like to stress three premises for this research. First, to emphasize that this research is basically built on my own creating experience, so it is personal and empirical. My research encompasses the dynamic between the artist's self and the expression. As Graeme Harper claimed, the challenge of practice-led research is to consider how reasonable and well-recognized the contemporary evidence is, and how to push further to develop future creative knowledge (2011, pp. 5–6). Of course, there are many further directions my research could take, but here. I consider the process and development of this project, *Little Mouse*, as the most

important element to discuss.

Second, I saw how I take concepts and theories as materials, either to create my artwork or clarify the roots of the creation. So, the study of thoughts itself is not the purpose for this research, but its application or impact to creation of *Little Mouse*.

Third, unpredictability was one main feature during the creation of this project. Until the project is finished, the artist will experience a process of uncertainty, not knowing what the outcome will be (Carabine, 2013, p. 34). My understanding of this project changed over time. As Gavin Sade said, ‘*The challenge for artistic researchers is to develop methodological strategies that are able to reveal the habits of mind and of body*’ (2012, p. 3). So this process was like a journey in which I explored life issues. The most difficult part of *Little Mouse* was how to limit the area of research during the creative process (Gray and Malins, 2004, p. 36). Accordingly, I listed three main directions to narrow the scope and approach: cultural study, practical work and communication with the potential audience, addressed in the following chapters.

1.5 Expected Contribution

Anke Coumans, Professor of Image in Context, Leiden University, argued that artistic research concerns the action of ‘representation and interpretation’ which is relative to the ‘context and value-driven’ (2009, p. 176). *Little Mouse* was driven by my core concern - how people respond to the darkness of life - to explore how to express this in practice: this was for me a spiritual journey. I attended to the development of the idea, to discuss each creative process, in constructing the practical work, reflecting on research and then integrating all the practical-

based material.

The creative process of art work is complex and mysterious, sometimes especially for the creator herself. I adapted many methods during certain parts of the creation and research process, including ‘contextual review’, ‘concept mapping’, ‘visualization’, ‘video’, ‘3D models’, ‘experimentation with materials’, ‘reflection-in-action’, ‘feedback’, ‘use of metaphor and analogy’ and ‘storyboard’ (Gray and Malins, 2004, p. 30). My research materials include C. G. Jung’s concept of the *Individual*, Zen Buddhism’s *Ten Cow Herding*, contemporary popular literature, cultural studies and visual materials including film, animation, graphic novels, drama, and picture books relevant to *Little Mouse*. I entwined this research with practical work, creating a fantasy story and a series of illustrations. Here I ‘open the black box’ and clarify my creative process, from constructing a visual reality to capture the abstract concept, to building up a systematic framework for this research, to increase understanding about the integration of the whole process (Kay, 2013, p. 131).

To contribute to understanding of the creation of the picture book, I envisage two sorts of audience: scholars interested in this topic, and the creators of picture books, illustrators and writers.

According to the definition of practice-based research by The UK Council for Graduate Education, the creative art work itself is, ‘*distinct in that significant aspects of the claim for doctoral characteristics of originality, mastery and contribution to the field are held to be demonstrated through the original creative work*’ (1997, p. 14). So, the creation of the picture book itself is my first contribution. From its drawings, colour, setting, characters, tone, to its plot, it presents on multiple approaches to increase creativity and transfer researches into an

art form, both pictures and stories, with originality.

Second, since I am also picture-book creator, I intend to provide an inside perspective on the creative process. It means to help interested scholars with first hand reflection on practice on based research, to fill the gap between researchers and creators. I demonstrate a possible studio-art research approach - to create a picture book from a cultural approach, practical works and communication with the audience.

Thirdly, I want to show how my reading in cultural theory- Jung, Propp, Geertz, Warner- changed my attitudes to my practice and enabled me to push my creative process into a deeper understanding.

Chapter 2

Cultural Journey to Approach the Story of *Little Mouse*

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In this chapter, I discuss the ideas inside and behind the picture book, *Little Mouse*, and explore more broadly the subject with which I am concerned, a life-changing journey. I use ‘thick description’ to extend my observation and reflection from the creative experience, which particularly matters to me, conversion as the ‘ground’ for the major concepts in *Little Mouse*. The concept of ‘thick description’ I adopt here from Clifford Geertz which indicated not an entire life of a human being, but a selection of relatively important concepts from art, literature, and theories. As Geertz argued: ‘*man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning*’ (1973, p. 5). This chapter is informed from this perspective: the better to conceptualize, understand, and interpret other studies into my core concern, a life-changing journey, literally and conceptually (Geertz, 1973, p. 227). As an artist, I started my voyage to approach my inner difficulties, and see how this life experience could be reflected my work. Here I reveal the development of key ideas in it.

This chapter has three sections. In the first, I look at the cultural backgrounds of myself as artist, to identify the roots of my creative work. The second illustrates the concepts that I am interested in communicating my work, the C. G. Jung's theories 'Individuation', the Zen Buddhist fable, 'Ten Cow Herding', and the visual evolution of the concept of a 'monster' an inner, or psychological in art. The third section explains how I set out the primary ideas of my fiction world, drawing on this research and transforming it into the basic themes of *Little Mouse*.

2.1 Before the Journey: My Visual and Narrative Roots

People are shaped by the society around them; artists especially have to be sensitive to the surrounding environment. My visual roots are embedded in the culture of my home country, Taiwan. The contemporary culture of Taiwan is the product of different cultural forces because of its political and cultural history.

An island close to the south of China, Taiwan was inhabited by dozens of self-ruling aboriginal tribes before the seventeenth century. Since then, Chinese immigrants – mostly from the southern China area – became the largest group on the island and brought Chinese culture. Especially during China's Qing Empire, the territory of Han Chinese immigrants on Taiwan became larger and larger between 1683 and 1895. Then Taiwan was ruled by the Japanese Empire between 1895 and 1945; Japanese culture has since remained a strong force in Taiwan ever since. After the end of World War II (1945) until now, Taiwan belonged to the Republic of China government. Chinese culture became mainstream again. But it was not the only forceful power of public culture in Taiwan. After the 1980s, under the trend of globalization and the international culture consumption, American and Japanese public cultures- especially

in the public entertainment area - entered Taiwan and played important roles in the daily life of Taiwanese. I was born in Taiwan in the 1980s, so I have been deeply shaped by Taiwan's unique geographical, political and historical relationships, expressed for instance in the popularity of foreign television programmes and movies. In my childhood, going to a foreign movie, watching foreign television, or eating at McDonalds were all regarded as treats - even the fashions - for people of my generation. My creative work grew from this environment.

American pop culture was a great part of my visual roots: carried by films and TV programmes. Like many other people of my generation, I enjoy the sense of special experience brought by cinema since my childhood. This joy started from 1995 when Walt Disney opened the first of Asia's overseas exclusive television channels in Taiwan. Since then, Disney cartoons - such as *Snow White* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940), and *Fantasia* (1940). (Figure 2.1) - could be accessed in cinemas and entered every household on TV. I still remember the excitement when I saw *Fantasia* for the first time, and it left images in my mind: the dream-like scenes, the colour with music as if entering a magic world, and the dancing broom with Micky Mouse. Soon, *Bambi* (1942), *Cinderella* (1950), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and *101 Dalmatians* (1961) were also available on TV. This opened the experience of American animation for the children of Taiwan. Short cartoon animations by Fleischer Studios also became early childhood memories for me, such as *The Bugs Bunny Show* (1960) by Paramount, *Popeye* (1932), and *Daffy Duck* (1937).

In addition to the animations on TV, I was also fascinated by animated films in the cinema. Since my childhood, Disney films have gained huge popularity with cinema audiences in Taiwan, from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994), *Pocahontas* (1995). Some criticized Disney as a cultural product of

capitalism, making an economic exploitation of the third world through post-colonialism, to export its culture (Liu, 1998, pp. 1–10). Disney animation in Taiwan extended to a variety of businesses, including toy merchandise. Disney film fever since 1989 had built the basic audience with a taste for American animations. Besides Disney, Pixar Animation Studios such as *Toy Story* (1995) and *Monsters, Inc.* (2001, Figure 2-3), were also successful in Taiwan, welcomed both for children and for young adults, including me.

Unlike Disney films, with their express value of making ‘dreams comes true’ (Giroux, 2010, p. 26), Pixar prefers to discuss the idea of humanity, relationships, and reveal another American belief that ‘the choices you make and the way you treat others determines how human you really are’ (Munkittrick, 2011). In the cases of *Toy Story* and *Monsters, Inc.*, we see that their stories are not all related to magic, nor do they all praise the idea of a dream come true; from a fictional world they deliver complex and hidden mainstream messages through parallel reality. They contain more adult elements, including discussion of religion and ethnicity, very different from typical Disney narratives. This direction reveals visual narration’s postmodern features - subversive, funny and double-layered. I saw these works on TV or cinema from my childhood to teenager years, so cartoon type characters naturally informed my visual creations.

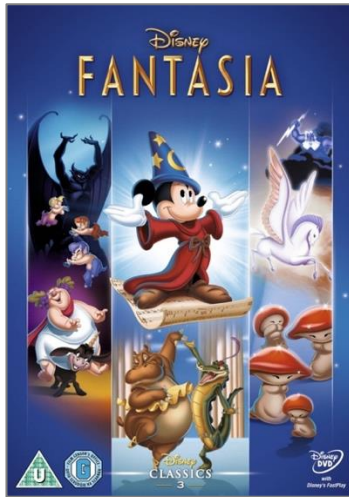


Figure 2-1
Fantasia, 1940

(Joe Grant, Dick Huemer, 1940. *Fantasia*. Walt Disney Productions.)

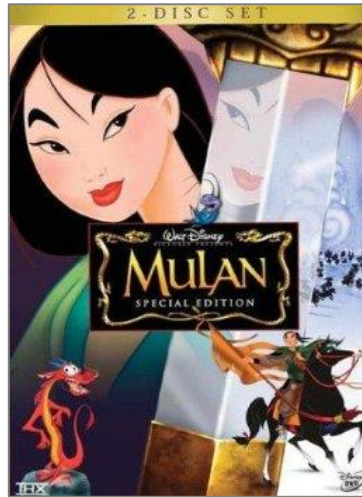


Figure 2-2
Mulan, 1998

(Bancroft, T., Cook, B., 1998. *Mulan*. Walt Disney Productions.)



Figure 2-3
Monsters, Inc., 2002

(Silverman, D., Unkrich, L., Docter, P., 2002. *Monsters, Inc.* Disney Pixar,)

Another important source of my visual style is Japanese pop culture, especially manga and animations. Japanese culture became part Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, and elements have remained in Taiwanese lives since the Japanese left after 1945. In the 1980s, the younger generation of Taiwanese took up, especially Japanese manga and animations, and they remain popular for children and adults in Taiwan today. The reasons why manga is welcomed by Taiwanese can be discussed from two aspects: access and model. First, the special history with Japan means that anime and manga are easily understood in Taiwan. Second, the contents of ‘cultural similarity’ or ‘cultural proximity’ for Asians (Cooper-Chen, 2001, p. 106); manga represents ‘what it means to be Asian’ (Wong, 2009, p. 338) and ‘the possibility of modernity in an Asian image’ which could be ‘identifiable and accessible’ (Leung, 2002, p. 66).

Now, manga has a wide age range of readers, from children to adults (Wong, 2006, p. 29), because of its varied subject-matter of deeper discussion of humanity, relationships and dreams, as in *Naruto*, *Bleach*, *One Piece*, *Death Note*, and *Rurouni Kenshin*. After World War Two, in

manga theme started to reflect the issue and trauma of the post-war period, such as ‘the destruction of the world’, ‘mecha genre’, ‘science adventure’ and ‘new ideas of freedom or democracy’ (Bouissou, 2010, p. 25).

The subjects of manga changed as the audience has grown up and they reflect the problems of each generation (Bouissou, 2010, p. 27). When I was a teenager, I loved to read manga and Japanese cartoons: reading manga is a solitary activity to ‘release tension’ from the stress of daily life and from relationships (Cooper-Chen, 2001, p. 106). *Case Closed (also Detective Conan*, Figure 2-4), *Crayon Shin-chan* (Figure 2-5), *Sailor Moon*, *Slam Dunk*, and *Chibi Maruko-chan* (Figure 2-6) were extremely popular. In these works all the protagonists have a big ‘baby’ head, big eyes and unrealistic body proportions. These features are copied from Disney comics and animations (Bainbridge and Norris, 2010, p. 243), however, Japanese manga has absorbed this trait and modified it into its own style.

Now, Taiwanese children born after 1980 are over 30 years old, and many retain the habit of watching manga and cartoons. For example, I am particularly interested in the visual imagination shown by *Naruto* (Figure 2-7) and *Bleach* (Figure 2-8). Both stories blend some features of Japanese traditional culture, such as ninja and kendo, into a visual expression of its costume and mise-en-scène, but with universal subject matter: friendship, love and relationships. As an American culture form, successfully ‘narrative transparency’ maintains my interest in manga. Scott Robert Olson writes that ‘*Transparency is defined as any textual apparatus that allows audiences to project indigenous value, beliefs, rites, and rituals into imported media or the use of those devices*’ (Mahwah, N.J: Routledge, 2004, 114). This transparency assists cross cultural export. As Jason Bainbridge and Craig Norris point out, the popularity of manga strongly draws on the visual language which has become universal, and

this fixed stylistic framework enables manga to be taken up easily by other local cultures (2010, p. 240).

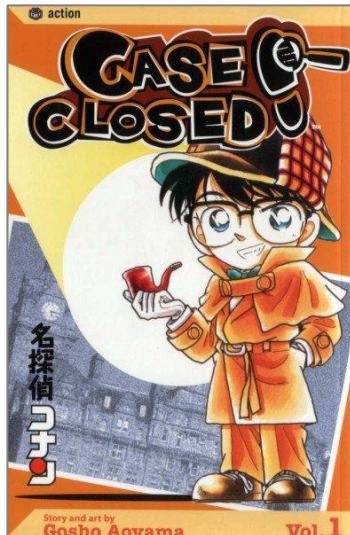


Figure 2-4
Case Closed
(Aoyama, G., 2004. Case Closed. Shogakukan.)



Figure 2-5
Crayon Shin-Chan
(Usui, Y., 1990. Crayon Shin-Chan. Futabasha Publishers.)



Figure 2-6
Chibi Maruko-chan
(Sakura, M., 1986. Chibi Maruko-chan. Shueisha.)

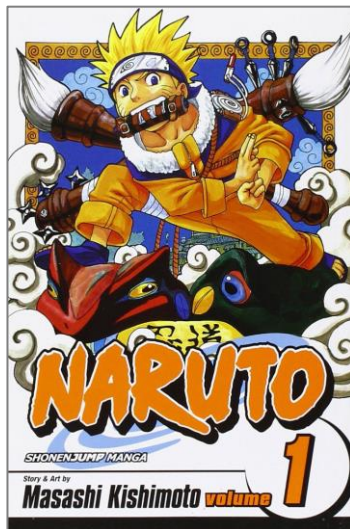


Figure 2-7
Naruto
(Kishimoto, M., 1997. Naruto. Shueisha.)

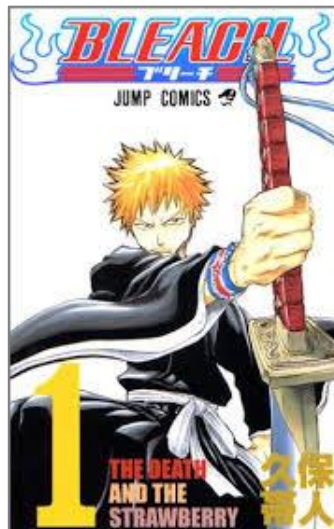


Figure 2-8
Bleach
(Kubo, T., 2001. Bleach. Shueisha.)

The style of Japanese manga has thus become a visual ‘lingua franca’ (common language) for my generation of Taiwanese, including artists. The work of Yue-Yin (岳印, 1985-), an active Taiwanese comic artist the same age as me, could be a good example of this. His series *Luck and Disaster Boy* (福禍少年, 2013-) inherits parts of Japanese ‘cute’ style in the character design, such as a pair of animal-ears or animal-horns with a human being (Figure 2-9). My creations are not so ‘Japanese’ as Yue-Yin’s, but still contain such elements. For example, I took the ‘big head and baby face’ of Japanese manga in the characters (Figure 2-4 to 2-6) to shape and visualize my protagonist, Little Mouse. (e.g. Figure 2-21)



Figure 2-9
Luck and Disaster Boy (2013-), Yue-Yin
(Yun, Y., 2015. *Luck and Disaster Boy* (福禍少年). Tong Li Publishing Co)

Apart from manga, Japanese animation directors have also been important for the creation of Japanese visual pop culture, such as Mamoru Oshii (押井 守, 1951-), Katsuhiro Otomo (大友 克洋, 1954-), Hayao Miyazaki (宮崎 駿, 1941-), and Kon Satoshi (今 敏, 1963-2010). The best known worldwide and in Taiwan is Hayao Miyazaki, writer and director of the Studio Ghibli animations *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), *Castle in the Sky* (1986), *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988, Figure 2.10), *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1990), *Porco Rosso* (1992), *Princess Mononoke* (1994) and *Spirited Away* (2001). Miyazaki's work is popular with children and adults, and his popularity in Taiwan continues to grow, and his creations are often discussed in art-related academic circles in Taiwan, from the art style to the content of his animations (Chung, 2013). I was fascinated by the anthropomorphic and imaginary characters he created in *My Neighbor Totoro* (Figure 2-10). Miyazaki created monster images within sustainable fantasy worlds; that roused my imagination of a parallel space and time which is like the world we lived but with many different creatures and a strong moral frame for the narratives. Studio Ghibli is one of the primary inspirations for *Little Mouse*.

Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli often adopt literature from different cultures, then re-interpret it. '*Howl's Moving Castle*' was originally a 1986 fantasy novel by British writer Diana Wynne Jones¹; Miyazaki is animation film *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), changes the story considerably adding an 'anti-war' political perspective. (Figure 2-11) The mise-en-scène of the animation of *Howl's Moving Castle* involved visual research from many places in Europe, including Alsace, Heidelberg, and Paris (Miyazaki, 2005a, p. 12). Miyazaki's *Howl's Moving Castle* projects Japanese ideas about Europe in its exotic scene; however, the story

¹ Diana .W. Jones had been through her childhood in World War II. She studied in Oxford University, under the tutelage of C.S Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien.

still reflects Japanese cultural habits and life style. Clearly, Miyazaki prefers to find ideas from different cultures to enhance the layers of his work. A fantasy European background setting is common in many of his films, such as *Sky City*, *Porco Rosso*, and *Kiki's delivery Service*. On the other hand, the main ideas of his work were transferred from Japanese mythology, folklore, and fairy tales. Some characters in his works share elements with those in stories from different ethnic groups. For example, we could find similar prototypes for Shishi God in *Princess Mononoke* in different cultures, such as the folktale of Sanshin (山神) in Chinese folklore (Lao (勞), 2006, p. 341) and the Green Man in British folklore (Carruthers, 2009, p. 163). Miyazaki takes ideas from global myth and folklore to build his characters and his world.



Figure 2-10
Poster of *My Neighbour Totoro* (1998)
(Miyazaki, H., 1988. *My Neighbor Totoro*.
Studio Ghibli.)



Figure 2-11
Poster of *Howl's Moving Castle* (2005)
(Miyazaki, H., 2005a. *Howl's Moving Castle*.
Studio Ghibli.)

Both American and Japanese pop culture after the 1980s are important sows for my visual creation, particularly animations and manga. However, I am aware of their similarities and differences. Miyazaki and Disney have had most influence on me. Both like to adopt stories from different cultures then interpret them in their own ways, to create a new style with features of their own cultures. So, Miyazaki translated the British novel *Howl's Moving Castle* as a film with strong elements of Japanese culture; and Disney takes stories from other cultures - *Snow White*, *Pinocchio*, *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast* from Europe; *Aladdin* from a Middle Eastern folk tale; *Mulan* from a Chinese legend - then interprets them in American psychological style. But, the core concerns of Studio Ghibli (the animation company of Miyazaki) and Disney films are quite different. Miyazaki tends to provide open-endings that lets the audience ponder, and imparts liberal ideas in his films – *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* and *Princess Mononoke* are environmentalist fables. Disney's films have upbeat happy endings. As an artist, I prefer Miyazaki's story-telling.

Besides American and Japanese animations, I saw Chinese ink style animations produced by Shanghai Animation Film Studio, including *Little Tadpoles Looking for Mama* (小蝌蚪找媽媽, 1961, Figure 2-12), *Moody* (牧笛, 1963), *Prince Nezha's Triumph Against Dragon King* (哪吒鬧海, 1979) and *Three Monks* (三個和尚, 1980, Figure 2-13). They represent an important part of the art education system for my generation in Taiwan as Chinese ink-drawing was taught in art class in high school. (see Chapter Three) Such works were less important for my own work; like other young people in Taiwan in the 1980s, American and Japanese animations are more attractive to my generation (Wong, 2006, p. 28), apart from their powerful cultural influence, I think the main reason can be its universal visual language and reinterpretation of local culture containing a hybrid of exotic elements (Giroux and Pollock, 2010, pp. 32, 113).



Figure 2-12
A scene of *Little Tadpoles Looking for Mama* (1961)
(Te, W. 1961, *Little Tadpoles Looking for Mama*, Shanghai Animation Film Studio. 4:13)



Figure 2-13
A scene of *Three Monks* (1980)
(Xu, J. 1980, *Three Monks*, Shanghai Animation Film Studio. 2:33)

I developed my visual style also through picture-books, illustrated novels, manga, comic books, cartoons and animation: in Taiwan, it is easy to access international visual products, especially from English-speaking countries such as America, UK, Australia, and also Japan. Some of them made a big impression on me. I have already mentioned *Peter Rabbit* (1902) by Beatrix Potter; as a child I also read *Snoopy* (1950) by Charles M. Schulz, *Garfield* (1978) by James Robert, *Pink Panther* (1963) by Friz Freleng, and *Paddington Bear* (1958) by Michael Bond, illustrated by Peggy Fortnum. As a teenager, I spent a lot time reading manga, comic books and animation, for example, *Sailor Moon* (1992) by Takeuchi Naoko, *Yu Yu Hakusho* (1990) by Togashi Yoshihiro, and *Slam Dunk* (1988) by Inoue Takehiko.

As a adult, I was deeply moved by *The Arrival* (2007) by Shaun Tan, and a series of works by Jimmy (幾米, 1958-), who is a famous Taiwanese picture-book artist (Figure 2-14). Most of Jimmy's works are more than one hundred pages, and tend to address 'adult' issues in modern times, such as feelings of loneliness and the alienation of relationships in city life, or the difficulty of a teenager from a single-parent family. He wraps up his concern for serious social issues with sugar coating, creating a beautiful picture-book story with 'cute' characters

inhabiting colourful magical worlds. Jimmy's works are like contemporary poems for adults and touch the hearts of city people, so he has a wide age range of readers in Taiwan and China. Both Jimmy's works and Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* are the most important precedents which inspired me in the creation of picture-books, especially their visual narrative styles.

After coming to Scotland, I continued my interest in the art form of picture books designed for an older readership, such as *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (2007) by Brian Selznick, *Tales from Outer Suburbia* (2009), *The Lost Thing* (2010) and *Bird King* (2011) by Shaun Tan, *Monster* (1994) by Urasawa Naoki, and *The Last Resort* (2003) by J. Patrick Lewis and illustrated by Roberto Innocenti. Also, I relooked at the classical fairy tales and stories with different versions of illustrations, such as the works of Hans Christian Andersen, Grimm Brothers, and Lewis Carroll. I realised that the potential readers of picture books can be adult, because older readers, like me, have already cultivated a taste for visual art, and still find interest in the stories.

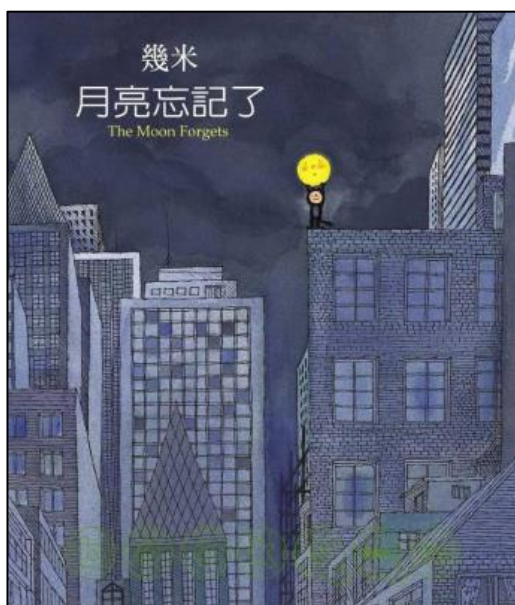


Figure 2-14
Cover of *The Moon Forgets* (2007), by Jimmy
(Jimmy (幾米), 2007)



Figure 2-15
Moon-cat, 2009
(author's drawing, 2009)

Above all, my background mixes different cultures, informing my ideals, work and taste. So, when I left Taiwan, I had a style formed by these multiple cultures and my broad art practice, like calligraphy and printmaking. I created my imaginary friend, Moon-cat (Figure 2-15) in 2007, for my printmaking project *Next Stop- Happiness*. Moon-cat, therefore, accompanied me across 10,075 kilometres, and triggered the project of *Little Mouse*. Clearly, he and my other characters do not entirely from my personal experience: I am aware that my style is also a cultural production under the contemporary context of globalization. After research into my creative roots, I realised that visually Moon-cat has the same big head and big eyes as cover illustration of *You're not so lonely* (Figure 2-16) shown. I created him as the protagonist of my experimental creative work between 2009 and 2010, '*You're not so lonely*', my university project, a short novel (in Chinese) with 24 mezzotint print illustrations. (Figure2-16) My visual style in this project condenses my concept of Europe: an imaginary exoticism and distortion

of dreams. Like the work of Studio Ghibli, it is a projection of an Asian-ised dream of Europe, perhaps a reverse concept of *Orientalism* (1978) as explained Edward Wadie Said (1935-2003). Through the adventures of the protagonist, I explored the question of ‘who am I?’, particularly reflecting on the mood in *The Metamorphosis* (1915) of Franz Kafka (1883-1924), and *The Outsider* (also known as *The Stranger*, 1942) of Albert Camus (1913-1960). I became fascinated by issues of life, then expressed my thoughts in my creative work. Visually, I created mysterious cartoon-like creatures as characters in dark scenes of this story (Figure 2-16). I thought that my new work - *Little Mouse* - must inherit certain features of this experience, such as the issue of life, fantasy creatures, and an imagined world, even though I was not particularly aware of it during my creative activity.

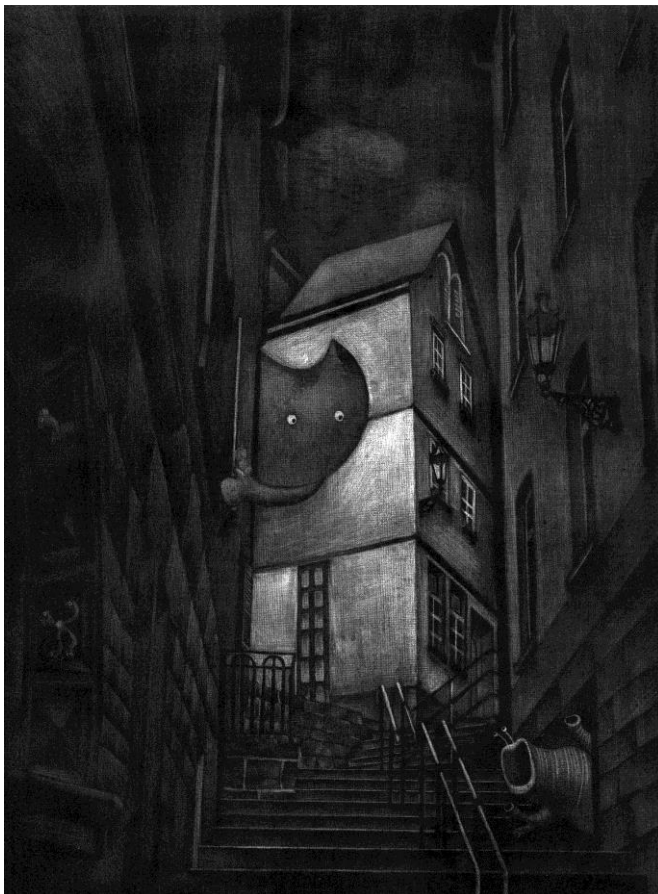


Figure 2-16
Cover Illustration of *You're not so lonely*
(Author's drawing, 2009)

2.2 On the Journey

The ‘migration’ experience from Taiwan to Edinburgh caused me to rethink my self-identity and rouse my imagination into both the host-land and homeland (Safran, 1991, p. 92). Through this process of migration, I sense that spiritual reflection is deeply bound into the artist’s experiences; and it would become part of my work, even unintentionally.

As an international student in Edinburgh, my initial ‘cultural identity’ was founded on relative issues, ‘*gender, sexuality, class, religion, race and ethnicity, nationality*’ (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 272). In Scotland, I was often asked ‘*Where are you from*’, ‘*Are you Taiwanese or Chinese?*’, and ‘*Why did you come here?*’. I found no simple answers to these questions. They pushed me to rethink the relationship between myself and this world consciously, and foregrounded the issue of cultural ‘belonging’ (Bhabha, 1990, p. 122). I gradually re-constructed my cultural identity through constantly comparing difference in culture ‘in process’ (Hall and Gay, 1996, p. 2). As Geertz pointed out: ‘*Culture denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life*’ (1973, p. 89). Thoughts on cultural identity became crucial elements for me to create *Little Mouse*, as I thought about the mix of different cultures carried in me.

With this perspective, I launched a series of studies to shape a new picture book, *Little Mouse*. Next, I explain the crucial interpretations and evolution of concepts as I experienced, learned and adapted the important concepts of C. G. Jung’s ‘Individuation’ and Zen Buddhism’s ‘Ten Cow Herding’, and the extended study of ‘monster’.

2.2.1 Personal Migration

I sense the cross-cultural artist is like ‘an interface’ to enter other cultures in the process of globalization (Hannerz, 1996, pp. 39–42), because he/she is from ‘*whole groups of individuals*’ and his/her works are deeply bounded by his/her cultures (Schneider, 2003, p. 216). Ulf Hannerz believes that the action of crossing nations offers people ‘*mediating possibilities*’ and ‘*provides points of entry into other territorial cultures*’ (1992, p. 251). Thus, the creative project *Little Mouse* contains cross-cultural elements. A main merit of this is that the researcher extends the range of different aspects of cultural elements to produce further understanding rather than new knowledge. Most important is understanding by making, ‘*what creativity is, the value it holds, and how it is fostered*’ (Elliot and Nakata, 2013, p. 112; Triandis and Brislin, 1984, p. 1107).

The experience of the migrating journey started the moment I boarded on the plane to Edinburgh in 2010. Although I had several short-term overseas travel experience - including to Europe - with my family since childhood, it was still my first time to travel alone to a strange land for a long-term stay, with no friends or family. With both excitement and anxiety, everything was suddenly ‘new’ for me. Though was not my first time on a long-distance flight, this travel alone with so many travellers squeezed into a small cabin together was a memorable experience to me, and one which started my ‘transnational journey’; as Steven Vertovec explains, the situation of globalization may cause the phenomenon of being ‘deterritorialized’ or being ‘transnational’, meaning having ‘originated in a land other than that in which it currently resides, and whose social, economic, and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed, span the globe.’ (1997, p. 277). When I was in the plane, like a child exploring the world, I could not stop wondering where the flow of people came from and where they were going. Whatever the reason for their movement, I could see that this mixed

group in transit blurred culture barriers and dramatically bridged for me ‘the gap between the local and the global’ (Cohen, 1996, pp. 5–18). For a while after that , I felt everything in the plane seemed like a dream for me.

When I arrived in Edinburgh for the first time, everything seemed strange. Walking on the street, everything seemed surreal, the landscape, the architecture, even the residents of Scotland. I was fascinated in the how details of the landscape differed from my hometown Kaohsiung: a tall clock tower in the city centre, the lamps on the streets, the stone cobbled streets, and dark alleys. I made a series of illustrations to document my observations and feelings of this new world (Figure 2-17). In these works, I used Moon-cat as myself to explore the city. I tried to convey the idea of living in a foreign land with feelings of nostalgia for home. It stimulated me to search for a new identity in this new world: who I am, why I am here and where I go (Kasasa, 2001, pp. 28–29). This nurtured my creative work – a journey of self-exploration.

The bewildered, and dream-like feelings from my migrating journey reminded me *The Arrival* (2007) by Shaun Tan (1974-), the feelings of an immigrant experienced on a new host land - bewilderment, panic, surprise, nostalgia, loneliness – only with visual images, without any aside or dialogue, like a silent movie. On the cover of *The Arrival*, (figure 2.18) the man with a suitcase seems confused about his way; and he tries to communicate with a small creature which looks weird but cute and friendly. Shaun Tan’s comment ‘*Bewilderment is not a bad thing: it can often bring out the best in us.*’ (2012, p. 8)

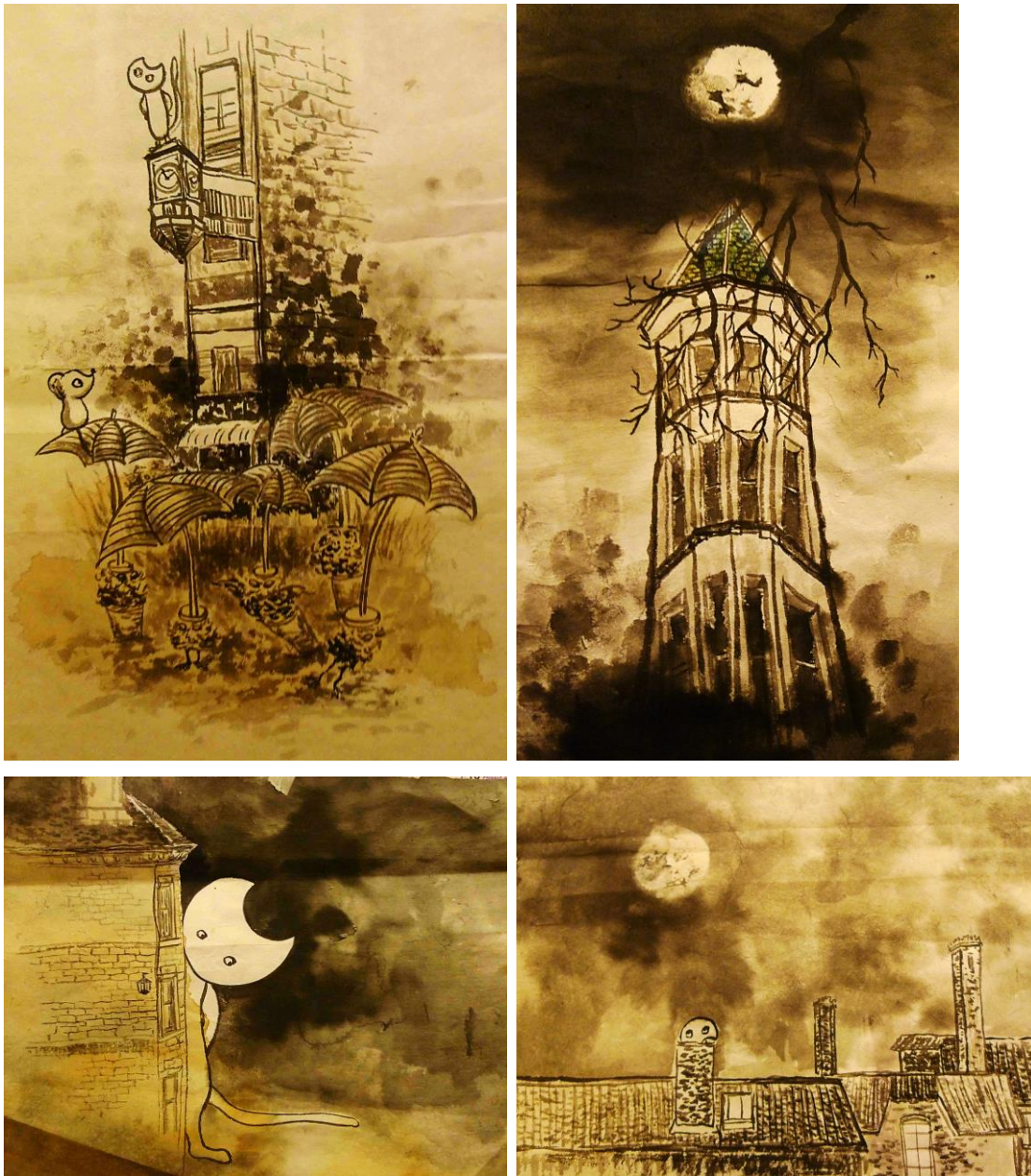


Figure 2-17
Moon-cat in Edinburgh
(author's drawing, Chinese-ink on Xuan paper, 2010)

The image is the only language of this book. Tan prefers his visual objects to ‘*carry some metaphorical weight*’ (Tan, 2009a). For example, one image depicts small human beings fleeing from the vacuum cleaner-like machine used by the giants (Figure 2-20). The meaning of this is not be directly explained but the expression of fear through this image is clear and loud to me. As a second generation immigrant, Tan attends to the issue of ‘belonging’. He

translates it in illustrations to depict the situations of the protagonist - in an unfamiliar world surrounded by unfamiliar language, social rules, and beliefs. By walking through the experience of the protagonist, those images allow the readers to put themselves the protagonist's shoes, to feel his internal struggles and doubts (Tan, 2009b, p. 31). For instance, Tan used twelve images to describe a series of actions of the protagonist during the immigration process (Figure 2-19), as standard procedure. I feel the anxiety from personal experience of approaching unfamiliar environments or events. *The Arrival* provided me with a model from which to reflect on such issues: furthermore, it shows that art can represent culture for us.

Homi K. Bhabha, a contemporary post-colonial theorist, argued that '*cultural production is always most productive where it is most ambivalent*' (1994, p. 159), I agree with this view. Referring to the experience of living in a new environment with different culture, existing 'beyond' in the host-land is a chance for an immigrating artist to observe, compare, and think, then to transmute these thoughts into creativity. The conflict of different cultures shocked my original concepts and actuated my inner dialogue of cognition.

My inner visual character changed; it became a timid little mouse (Figure 2-21) entering a strange land, carrying many questions between the self and the new land. This mouse is me, a small and harmless stranger, carrying a suitcase to into an unfamiliar world. Through this mouse, I processed the psychological dialogue with myself. More and more frequently, I started to seek theories or concepts with the similar issue, for comfort in my personal situation, and extend ideas into my creative work.



Figure 2-18
Cover of *The Arrival* (2006), by Shaun Tan

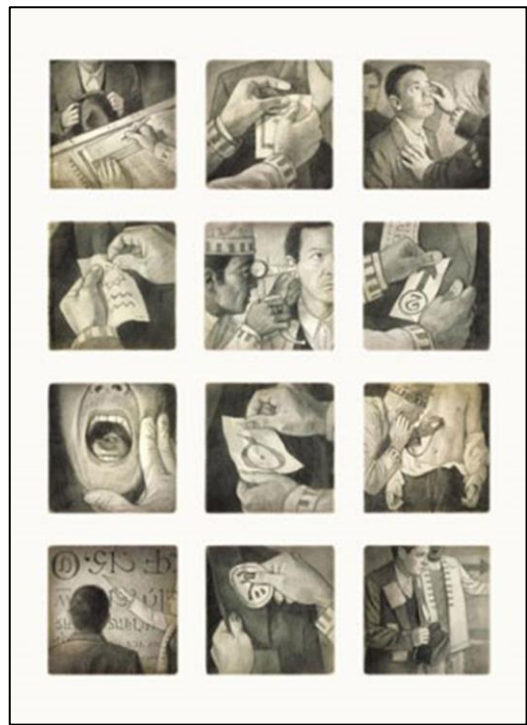


Figure 2-19
Inspection, from *The Arrival* (2006), by
Shaun Tan, Pencil on paper



Figure 2-20
The story of The Giants, from *The Arrival* (2006), by Shaun Tan, Pencil on paper



Figure 2-21
An early sketch of Little Mouse, 2011
(author's drawing)

2.2.2 'Individuation' of C. G. Jung, 'Ten Cow Herding' of Zen Buddhism, and Their Cross-cultural Similarities

The journey opens a chance for a human being to face a psychological movement which could be regarded as universal in different cultures (Ekman and Davidson, 1994, p. 16). Butler for instance argued that all human emotion cannot be classified as individual, but determined by cultural background (Butler et al., 2007, p. 44). Even from varied cultures, races, political systems and beliefs, the basic emotions of human beings form a common ground. I was looking for theories from different cultures which addressed similar psychological issues. I am aware that cross-cultural research carries the risk of over-simplifying cultural similarities; one can fall into stereotypes easily (Donna, 2004, p. 3). Even so, it is very useful for an artist or writer to look first for what is similar 'value, knowing and communication' in narration (Greenfield, 1997, p. 2).

So, I looked for literature or theories to find suitable ideas to shape my creation work. I hope they could both help me psychologically and be adapted into my creation. Thus, I became more interested in psychology of how a human being reacted toward the emotions. When I researched ideas for the creative work of this project, Jung's concept of 'Individuation' came to mind; I had studied it briefly as an undergraduate, and I decided to revisit it.

Carl Gustav Jung discussed the idea of 'Individuation' in works such as *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959) and *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961): a process of 'self-realization'. Murray Stein explains that, according to Jung,

An individual is drawn to integrate some of the figures and dynamics of the collective unconscious into a flexible conscious identity that does not repress inherent psychic polarities in order to bolster itself but rather to include figures and energies that are emerging continually from the depths of the psyche. Individuation is a dynamic, lifelong process. (2006, p. xiv)

The goal of 'Individuation' is to fill the gap between the conscious and the unconscious, to create a mature and richer new life and to raise the psyche into a healthier level from knowing the self. The self here is the centre containing all archetypes (Moacanin, 2003, p. 32-34). Jung used 'archetype' to mean '*the most ancient and the most universal thought-form of humanity*' (1959, p. 66). Petteri Pietikainen and Stockholm explained that, '*even though every person is in principle aware of his or her own state of consciousness, it is not so when it comes to the experience of an archetype*' (2001, p. 208). The individuation process can never be completely understood, because it is an ongoing evolution to know the unknown ending only in death (Schlamm, 2007, pp. 410–411). This uncertainty full of metaphor is the fascinating part for me. I sensed that the process of Individuation is like a journey: it could be a story from physical immigration to psychological change to accomplish Individuation.

I found a similar approach the idea of the journey in the Chinese parable '*Ten Cow Herding*'² in Zen Buddhism (Shields, 2010, p. 65). Zen Buddhism believes that everyone has the wisdom to complete a perfect life: what is called the ability to achieve 'Thy own nature' exists from the beginning and lives within us (Ng Yu-kwan, 1991a, p. 318; Weizhong Yang, 2001, p. 141). However, most people do not know their nature. '*Ten Cow Herding*' shows how to regain our own nature by undertaking training and carrying out constructive tasks at each stage. The cow-herd symbolizes the conscious being who would like to find the truth of his own nature (Wang (王), 2006, p. 22). Here, a rough visual narrative of *Little Mouse* appeared in my mind: it should contain two main characters, seeker and sought. In the '*Ten Cow Herding*' illustrations (see Appendix 1), the interactive process between cow and cow-herd represents the consciousness that searches for the bridge to communicate the inner heart. Osho argued that the searching cow means exploring the energy, the eternity of life's energy (2003, p. 8)³. '*Ten Cow-herding*' is a metaphor for a purifying journey: the cow-herd lost in the wood, finds the cow, fights with the cow, becomes a friend of the cow; finally the cow-herd and the cow mix come together. Inspired by this theory, I push my idea of the journey into a deeper concept: a journey of merging process, from an awaking to one's nature, to reconciliation with the self.

² There are many different illustrations of 'Ten Cows herding' in Song Dynasty, for example, in the work of the Zen Buddhist Master Pu-Ming (普明), the cow he depicted is a black cow which becomes white in the process. He used the colour change as a metaphor of purging. On the other hand, the Master Kuo-an (郭庵) used another way. Kuo-an did not change the outer colour of the cow. He believed that the nature of the self is eternally pure. Therefore, there is no need to change the colour. It always remains pure. My first time came across *Ten Cow Herding* from my mother, she studied sutra for many years. Personally, I prefer Kuo-an's idea of nature. I think human nature would not change under any conditions. It is what it is. This idea is rooted in my mind and helps me to form my ideal inner monster clearly.

³ Osho (1931-1990), born Chandra Mohan Jain in India, a professor of philosophy and guru; a spiritual teacher, he published many books discussing the issues of life.

From Jung and ‘Ten Cow Herding’, I realized that the life-changing journey is a personal path. The self-discovery journey is unique experience for different individuals (Shelburne, 1983, p. 63), but there are some common features psychologically. Zen Buddhist ‘Thy nature’ is similar to ‘the self’ of Jung’s theory. Both refer to an enormous power in the inner self, which only reveals itself when people discover it; Zen Buddhism provides simply instructions to approach ‘thy nature’. Rob Preece⁴, a contemporary British psychotherapist and practicing Buddhist argued,

One can say that both Western psychology and Buddhism point to the idea that our response to the world, not necessarily the world itself, is the basis of our problem. The world itself will always manifest the conditions that potentially cause suffering; we have only a limited capacity to alter this. Our inner response to those conditions can, however, be cultivated. (2013, pp. 36–37)

So I studied these theories, and tried to adapt certain concepts from them, then interpreted in a simplified way as the spiritual journey in *Little Mouse*.

First, I selected and mixed two ideas - shadow and the self /thy Nature - to construct the story and visualize one main character as both Shadow Monster and the Inner Monster. In Jungian theory, the shadow is one of the natures of a human being, an unconscious representation of the self living (Jung, 1959, p. 284). The ‘shadow’ is an aspect of self, repressed most of time, because it signifies unacceptable or immoral desires and characteristics that violate the social standard (Stein, 1998, pp. 105–107). The shadow is usually regarded as a dark side within the self, condemned by the conscious self (Todd, 1985, p. 43). The description of ‘shadow’ put a seed in my mind of a Shadow Monster. The Jungian multiple Self is a fascinating concept. Jung conceived the Self as involving archetypes of human beings – he saw in these the eternal

⁴ Rob Preece combined the theories of Jungian thought and Buddhism. I am particularly interested in this new perspective from two different theories.

essence of human types, and presenting an idea of wholeness. Jung said,

Intellectually the Self is no more than a psychological concept, a construct that serves to express an unknowable essence which we cannot grasp as such, since by definition it transcends our powers of comprehension.

(1956, p. 238)

I translated these ideas above into the basic set up of *Little Mouse*: the Inner Monster (the self) lives inside the Shadow Monster (the shadow), and the Shadow Monster hides inside the person. In my imagination, the Shadow Monster plays an unacceptable part of the self, imprisoned and ignored by its host; when it is released, all the repressed negative emotions come back to attack its host. Knowing the shadow, then approaching the Inner Monster living inside, is the first step to change his/her own life. The entire story of *Little Mouse* is built this structure.

After that, I started to consider the dynamic of the structure. Both theories refer to ‘the calling’ from the shadow self(the nature), and explain that this action can help to alert us to the problems we face. I interpreted this idea to shape my narrative, so it culminates in the calling from the Shadow Monster. In my first version of *Little Mouse*, I assumed it is natural for human beings to run away from Shadow Monster’s calling; but the more we run, the further away we are from getting to know the Inner Monster inside the horrible appearance of Shadow Monster. Then, the crucial key for my plot is how to translate the attitude of the protagonist toward the Shadow Monster. With this question, I started to look for relevant artworks to see how other creators narrate or visualize this kind of spirit quest journey.

2.2.3 Monster

‘Monster’ was a fascinating concept to me, even before the project of *Little Mouse*. In my previous project *You are not so lonely* (2009-10), I devised dark and mysterious cartoon characters with a European-style background to realise my imaginary world. In this work, I created a villainous monster, a dark creature with many tube-like accretions (Figure 2-22). I believed that it was a visualized image of my anxiety and nightmare, but I didn’t address this issue further at that time. When I started the project of *Little Mouse*, the image of the ‘monster’ kept coming back to my mind. So, I discovered that *Little Mouse* was not suddenly invented, but is deeply rooted in my experience of life, study, and practice works. I sensed ‘Monsters’ could be one of my main visual concepts to approach the ‘journey’ of the discussion above; it could also link the ideas I selected from C. G. Jung and ‘Ten Cow Herding’ as visualized expressions.

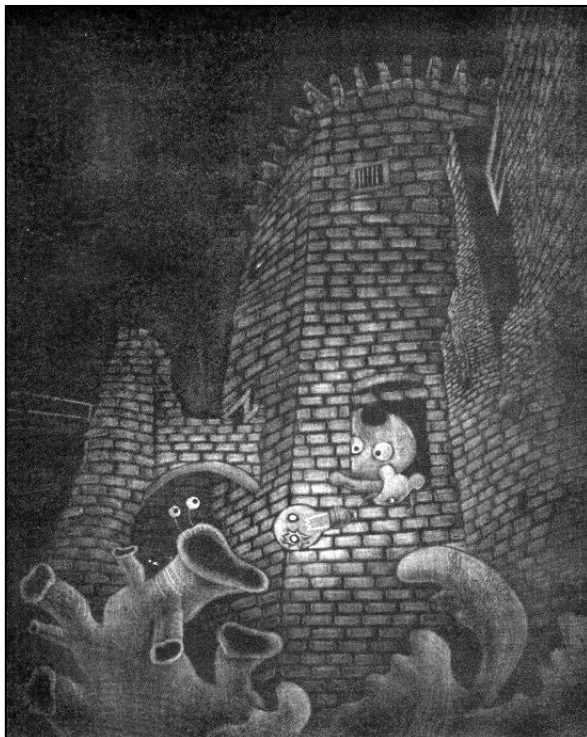


Figure 2-22
Cast into, from *You're not so lonely*
(Author's drawing, 2009)

The 'Shadow' of Jungian theory provides me with a psychological description of my monster. According to Jung, this 'shadow' self is a way of thinking about forbidden unconscious desires, denied by the ego; it is a representation of immoral characteristics or violations of the social norms. The similar concepts I selected from these two theories - human psychological change as a result of a journey - was a basic idea to reveal the secret of the monster. To shape my ideal of a monster with 'weight' parallel to reality, I studied the monsters interpreted in various forms both in literature and the visual arts, to develop the idea of 'monster' that I then extended into *Little Mouse*.

From my research experience, the concept of 'monster' is a classic topic in the visual arts. Here I discuss only a few artworks from this tradition of my favourite artists: Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516), Francisco Goya (1746-1828), and Odilon Redon (1840-1916).

Bosch's '*Purgatory*' (Figure 2-25) depicted a place of 'revelation of sin'; on the other hand, it also can be interpreted as 'a place (or state) inside the self' (Milne, 2011, p. 137). In this and other paintings, Bosch depicted many monsters with animal-like appearance and the body of human beings. From these strange and abnormal images of 'monster', I feel pain and terror. On the other hand, Goya's '*The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*' revealed a psychological imagery monster, a reflection of nightmare (Figure 2-23). Goya suggested that monsters '*exist only, as the original frontispiece of the Caprichos informs us, when reason sleeps. It is only the slothfulness of our minds that allows monsters to exist*' (Licht, 2001, p. 215). These, like nightmares, monsters reveal 'proto-aesthetic' nature '*because of its dense psychological model of hunter/victim...*' (Milne, 2011b, p. 200). As a symbolist artist in the late nineteenth century, following the period of Gothic Romanticism exemplified in the work of Edgar Allan

Poe (1809-1849), Redon developed a new form of the ‘human-like monster’. Redon’s charcoal and lithograph works reflect his imagination and the atmosphere of his era, such as the anxiety concerning the gradual erosion of humanity by science. I thought that Redon gave his monsters more human personalities and made them less aggressive, very different from his predecessors. For example, he created a spider-like monster with a wicked smile (Figure 2-24), that is fascinating for me. From the works of these three artists, we see that the idea and the image of the monster’s body develops with time and the shifting cultural environment.

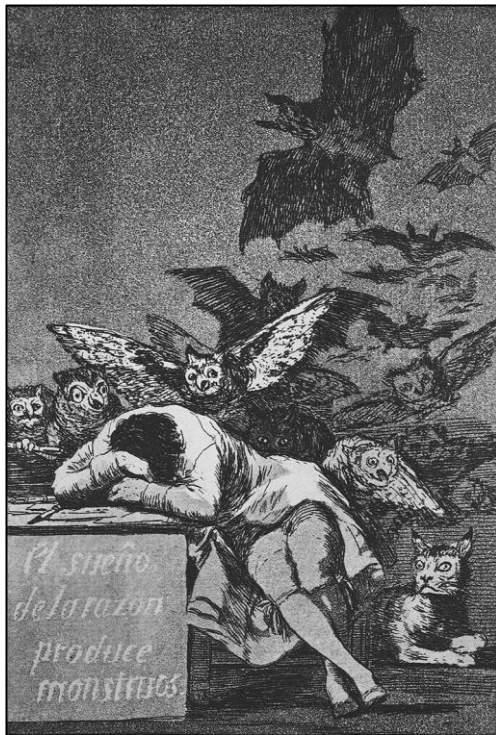


Figure 2-23
The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters (No. 43), from *Los Caprichos*, by Francisco Goya, 1799

(Goya, F. 1799, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* (No. 43), from *Los Caprichos*, Etching, aquatint, drypoint and burin, 21.5 cm × 15 cm, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, USA)

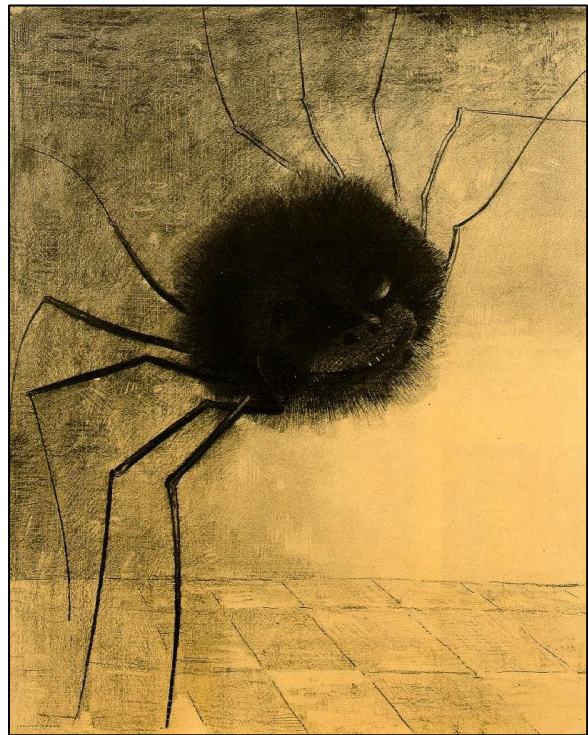


Figure 2-24
The Smiling Spider, by Odilon Redon, 1881

(Redon O. 1881, *The Smiling Spider*, Charcoal on paper, 47.5 × 37 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France)

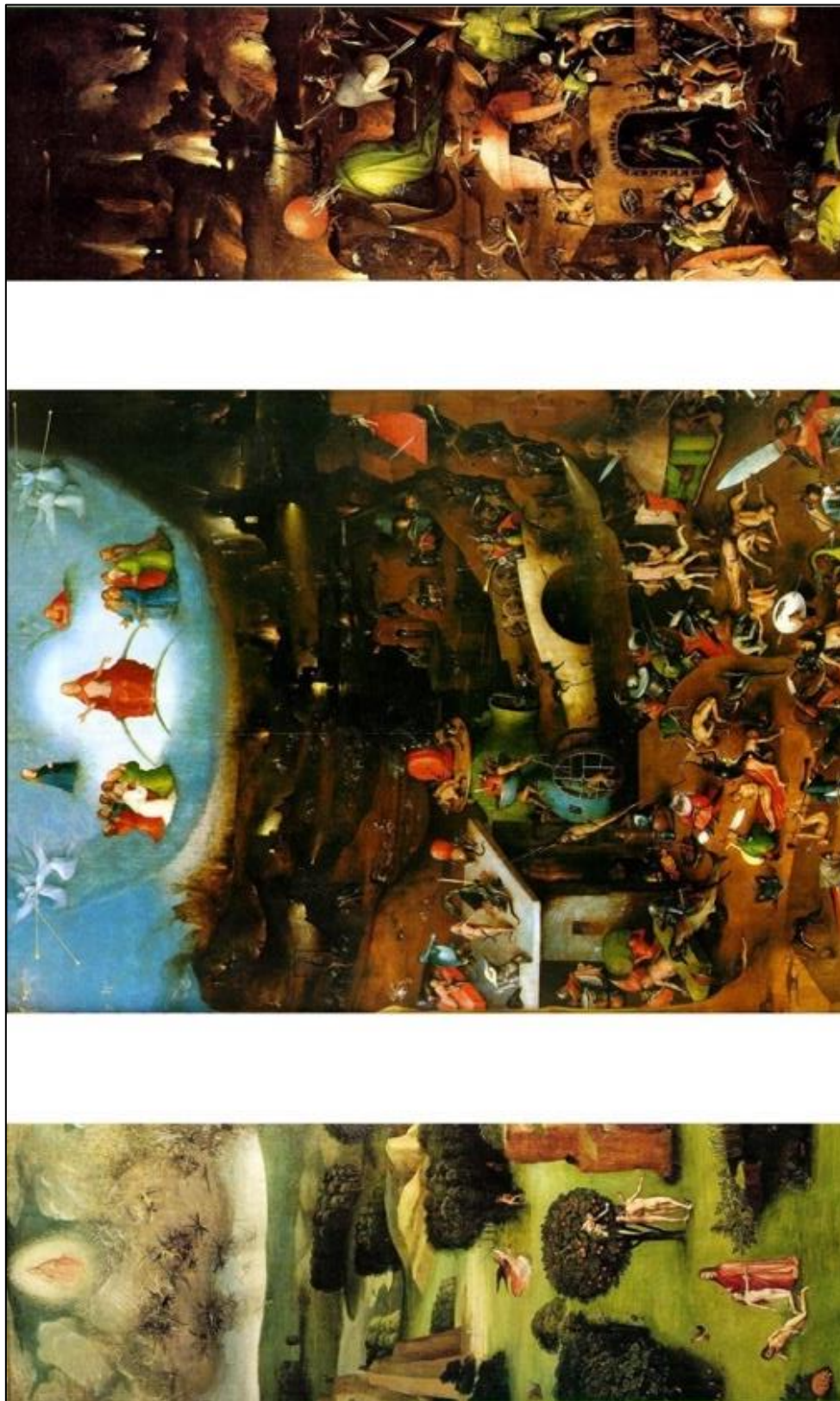


Figure 2-25
The Last Judgment, by Hieronymus Bosch, 1482
 (Bosch H. 1482, *The Last Judgment*, Oil-on-wood triptych, left and right panels 167.7 x 60 cm; centre panel 164 x 127 cm, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna)

In literature, the idea of the monster first depicted by Mary Shelley in '*Frankenstein*' (1818) turns into a surrogate of '*the fears of an entire mal-du-siècle generation caught in a sudden paradigm shift between tradition and modernity. This novel popularized a standard nineteenth-century science fiction archetype: the mad scientist who, in his hubris-filled pursuit of knowledge and power, betrays basic human values*' (Evans, 2009, p. 13). For me, the original Frankenstein's monster is like a self-image reflecting the dark psychology of modern human beings; notably Mary Shelley develops the monster into a sympathetic character.

I noticed that the cultural development of the form of the monster continues in contemporary artworks and literature. For example, Le Guin conceived of the shadow in *A Wizard of Earthsea*⁵ as powered by Ged's desire, ambition and jealousy; moreover, it is '*not simply evil. It is inferior, primitive, awkward, animal-like, childlike; powerful, vital, spontaneous*' (Le Guin, 1989, p. 53-54) and its features are always repressed and denied (1993, pp. 82–83). There is a wonderful description of the shadow in *A Wizard of Earthsea*,

For it was darkness itself that had awaited him, the unnamed thing, the being that did not belong in the world, the shadow had loosed or made. In spirit, at the boundary wall between death and life, it had waited for him these long years. It had found him there at last. It would be on his track now, seeking to draw near to him, to take his strength into itself, and suck up his life, and clothe itself in his flesh. (1993, pp. 82–83)

⁵ The story of *A Wizard of Earthsea* narrates a young warlock, Ged, fighting with his shadow. In the beginning, Ged released his shadow accidentally, and he tried many ways to escape it. However, this shadow still kept haunting him. Ged was forced to run in case he was invaded by his shadow, until he turned back to his master, Ogion, who helped Ged recover and to realized the truth about the shadow. After that, everything started to change. Ged became a hunter. He began his journey to pursue the shadow. Finally, he caught up with his shadow. When they met, Ged called out the true name of the shadow, 'Ged', and it reintegrated into Ged's body to make it whole.

I am impressed by how Le Guin used the actions of Ged to shape the relationship with the shadow. For example, after Ged is enlightened by his master Ogion, he started the journey, during which Ged left his home town, learned magic from the school of Roke, released his shadow, repented his mistake and returned from the world of death. He started to change his attitude toward the shadow. In the climax of this story, the shadow is one part of Ged's self: how can he abandon the part which belongs to himself? Here, I imagined my shadow monster like a nightmare, lurking and attacking the protagonist (Figure 2-26). Initially, inspired by Le Guin, I thought my Shadow Monster should appear like a black smoke which shapes according to his vessel. However, I amended its form to a human being in the final version. I adapted the idea of nightmare from Goya, and took the animal-like appearance but with human character from Redon to form my own monster.



Figure 2-26
Haunted by Shadow, an early drawing of Little Mouse
(author's drawing, lithograph, 2011)

From above discussion, having researched possible forms for the Shadow Monster, my next question was how to translate these ideas into my work. The animation *Nocturna* by Buz Alexander (2008) showed me a way to depict the dynamic between the human beings and the Shadow Monster. *Nocturna* concerns a little boy, Tim, who goes on an adventure in the night because he finds out his favourite star is missing. The children's keeper, Cat Shepherd, cannot refuse Tim's request, so takes him on the journey to search for the missing star. However, the peace is broken by dark shadow murdering the creatures who come out at night. The stars and the creatures of light become less and less. Tim is very afraid. He cannot help running from the monster, but it still haunts him. Tim does not understand the connection between himself and the monster at first, until Tim changes his attitude toward it. He realizes that he cannot run because he wants to protect his friends. This courage helps Tim to face the monster. As soon as Tim turns towards the monster, the fear of darkness is gone. Night is no longer so terrifying for him. Instead, the darkness is full of charm. From the story of *Nocturna*, the monster is like the unconscious denied by the self, originating from the protagonist: Tim's fear of darkness. No one can stop this monster's action but the boy himself. The Monster is so terrible because it grows from the fear inside the human's inner heart.

Nocturna visualized the fear as a dark monster which inspired me to reshape my form of Shadow Monster into a form of human being (Figure 2-27). Then, I found that whether I followed the shadow from Le Guin or the monster from *Nocturna*, in each case its character and voice were only shaped by the protagonist, not the monster itself. Based on this thought, I drew Figure 2-28 immediately after Figure 2-27, to depict the encounter from the perspective of the monster (see Chapter three). From this image, I used VTS (visual thinking strategies, see chapter three: Story Narration) and sensed that shunned from others might be the reason why my Shadow Monster is depressed and explosive. Then, I wondered did my monster have

any further emotion, or reaction toward this unfair treatment?



Figure 2-27
Fury of Shadow Monster
(author's drawing, lithograph, 2011)

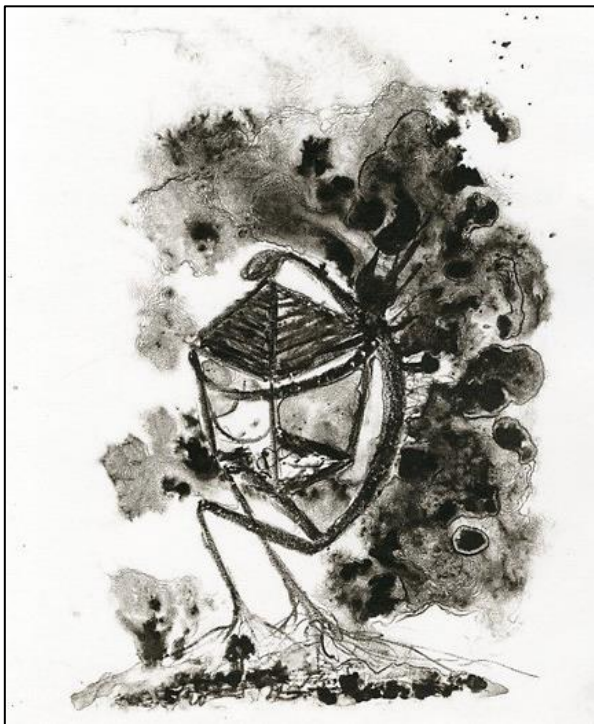


Figure 2-28
Shadow Monster with grief
(author's drawing, lithograph, 2011)

Maurice Sendak, the American picture book creator, fills my question of the blank voice of the imaginary monster in *Where the Wild Things Are*. In his cover at Figure 2-29, the monster is shown as a human being taking a nap peacefully under the tree. His/her appearance is hybrid with bull-like head, claws and fur. Sendak created a fictitious world where many wild creatures live and to which a little boy, Max, running away from home, travels; there he meets and befriends them. Sendak envisaged these monsters as having exaggerated personalities and an authenticity which many adults may lose or forget. The dream-like adventure took the child Max on a journey to learn how to make friends and to know himself more. From this story, I think it is clear, that, in our present culture, the shapes and narratives of monsters are opportunities for people to know the dark side of the self and to learn how to accept it (Fitzsimmons, 2004, p. 264). So I pushed my design further: the Shadow Monsters in *Little Mouse* are not so entirely terrible in appearance, and only show fury if mistreated.

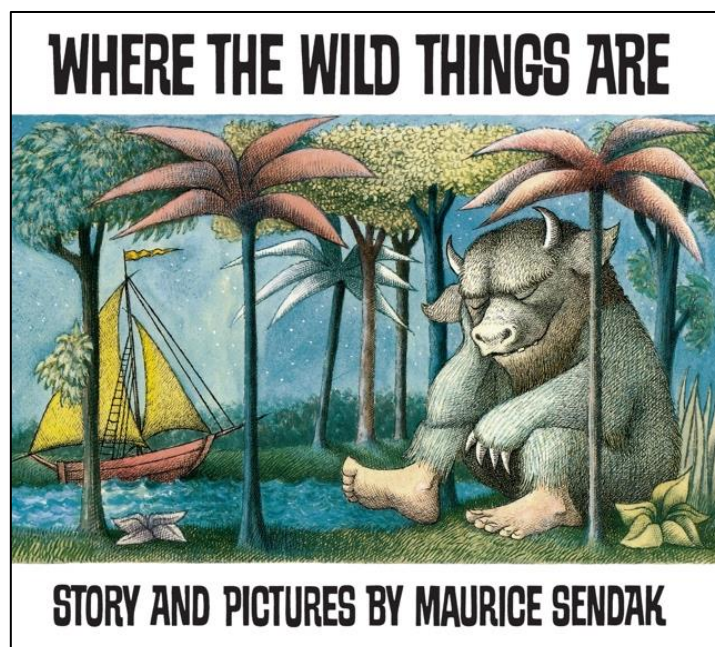


Figure 2-29
Cover of *Where the Wild Things Are*, Maurice Sendak, 1963
(Sendak, 1963)

From the above discussion, I like my monster to have different perspectives, including horror and human, as my response to monster images by previous artists in history. I found these representations of monsters- from Bosch's hell, to Goya's nightmare, to Sendak's dream friends- all ways of visualising my narrative that the shadow is summoned when a person's life is unbalanced, when bad things happen and people suffer. Preece argues that suffering originates from the mind which reacts toward uncontrollable experience from the outer world: however, it is possible to change the inner response toward this suffering (2013, p. 23). Sometimes, people cannot recognize and control the shadow so they are afraid of its power. Following this idea, I designed my protagonist, Little Mouse, who suffers from the shadow calling in his head, and because he cannot understand truly what it is, he runs away. Based on this assumption, the world in *Little Mouse* must be different from the reality we live in now. In the following section, I turn my discussion into establishing a fictional world to fit my concepts.

2.3 Reflection toward the Journey

I would say that this film is an adventure story even though there is no brandishing of weapons or battles involving supernatural powers. However, this story is not a showdown between right and wrong. It is a story in which the heroine will be thrown into a place where the good and bad dwell together, and there, she will experience the world.

- Hayao Miyazaki talks about *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki, 2001a, p. 13)

Here Miyazaki describes how he saw the archetypal meaning of *Spirited Away*; this is close to my own intention. The picture book *Little Mouse* tells an adventure of a reconciliation with

his darkness. In addition to my life experience, this work for me is also a reflection of my mind and a re-thinking of my individuation. Therefore, in this section, I reflect on the journey from my experience and research, and interpret it into the shape of my ideas of creative work, *Little Mouse*: a fiction world and the story in it. I realized that in my canon of fantasy sources, I was most drawn to the ones where the narrative had a spiritual dimension- like a parable or fable for modern times.

2.3.1 A Foreign Land

I discussed before that I was impressed by Murray Stein using a Grimms fairy tale, *The White Snake* (2004, p. 229) to reveal what a journey means for spiritual growth: first, the protagonist is required to leave his/her home and to enter a foreign land. The same concept of the foreign and fantastic land is shown in different stories, such as *Earthsea* by Ursula Le Guin, the Bath House by Miyazaki (Figure 2-30) in *Spirited Away* where everyone is required to work, or he/she will become a pig. Such fantasy environments are provided for protagonists to learn, experience fear, and for the audience to link to their own lives. Therefore, I adapted this idea and applied it to *Little Mouse*: a new environment with a unique culture, policies and rules. The size of this place may be small, perhaps a city, and not very easy to find. It is based on my ideal parallel universe which is a fusion of reality, fantasy, nostalgia, and adult reflection. I named it 'Light City', a self-exploration place for *Little Mouse* containing the following features I wanted to discuss. (for the practice discussion of Light City, see Chapter Three)

(A) From Utopia to Dystopia

Light City is a spiritual place, like a utopia for my protagonist to meet and communicate with Shadow Monster. However, if this story is about a journey, this fictional world cannot be too ideal a place because then there is no motivation for my protagonist to learn from it. Therefore,



Figure 2-30
Bath House in *Spirited Away*
(Miyazaki, H., 2001a. Studio Ghibli. fig. 00.17.03)

this world should be utopian in its appearance, and in fact it becomes a dystopia; we learn that it is worse than the place the protagonist comes from (Rogan, 2009, p. 309; Sargent, 1994, p. 9). The idea of a dystopian world is ‘more open to complexities and ambiguities, and more encouraging of new riffs of personal and political manoeuvres’; as in the cities of Fritz Lang’s film *Metropolis* (1927) and Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982) (Moylan, 2000, p. 182). I adapt this concept in my fiction world: Light City, a city with a dark secret.

(B) A Place to Discuss the Idea of the Self

In her classic Earthsea books, Ursula Le Guin emphasized the importance of true names, which made me think of the value of names. In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, only the giver and acceptor know a person’s true name, knowledge of such names powers the magic of this world. In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, the wizard is required to learn thousands of names to identify, comprehending universal nature and activate the magic. In one episode, Ged over-used his

magic to transfer himself into a hawk-shape; he could not regain human form again except with his master's help. Le Guin used this scene to indicate the danger of losing one's self, of 'staying in a form not his own' (1993, pp. 117–118). Without an identity, who am I? The same question is also referred to the animation in 2001, *Spirited Away*. The little girl, Chihiro Ogino, is deprived of her name by Yubaba in order to work in the bath house and save her parents who became the pigs. In the premise of *Spirited Away*, when people are robbed of their names by Yubaba, they will eventually forget who they are. In the bathhouse, Chihiro met many friends who helped her. Finally, she earned the opportunity to save her parents and went back to the real world (Miyazaki, 2001). This issue is also raised in the story of *Little Mouse*: when people abandon their Shadow Monster self, they lose their identity, forget who they are and the reason for living in the world. I translated this concept visually (Figures 2-31): the people who abandon their shadow, their outline shape dissolves and gets more and more similar to others in Light City.



Figure 2-31

Little Mouse, Goo, and people who abandon their shadow

(author's drawing, lithograph and water colour, 2013)

(C) A Universe with the Concepts of Balance and Equilibrium

Le Guin weavers in the concepts of balance and equilibrium as the basic rules in the world of Earthsea. These concepts are influenced by Chinese Tao theory⁶ and reflected in the story (Cornell, 2001, p. 322). Unlike other fantasy stories, such as Tolkien's dualistic world view⁷, Le Guin preferred to focus on how to appreciate the natural order instead of using unnatural methods which would break its balance. For example, the wizard Master Hand explains to Ged – and so to the reader – the theory of the world's balance.

'The world is in balance, in Equilibrium. A wizard's power of Changing and of Summoning can shake the balance of the world. It is dangerous, the power. It is most perilous. It must follow knowledge, and serve need. To light a candle is to cast a shadow...' (Le Guin 1993, 48)

So she emphasizes the importance of balance and equilibrium and makes clear the consequence of the breaking this balance. I extend this idea of a natural balance of power into the design of my fiction world: the unfair treatment toward Shadow Monster will lead to crisis, however, if its energy is released properly, it will not be a threat.

(D) The Door Leading to the Inner Monster

A Koan⁸ told by master HuiKo⁹ (487-593) enlightens me to create another spiritual place

⁶ *Tao Te Ching* is a Chinese classic philosophical text. It enhances the self's spirit by practice both psychologically and physically.

⁷ The settings of *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien is under Christian duality theory. The war of justice and evil is like the story of the fight between angels and Lucifer.

⁸ In Buddhism, Koan is like a document which recorded the master's statements and the dialogue with the pupils. In Buddhism, many Koans reveal the meaning of life and the process by which to discover 'nature' and to awaken human awareness. (Low and Purser, 2012, p. 340)

⁹ In Chinese character is 慧可.

inside my story. HuiKo asked Bodhi-dharma¹⁰ (421-528) how he could put his heart at ease. Bodhi-dharma replied, ‘*Put your heart here, and I will help you.*’ Suddenly, HuiKo realized that there is nowhere that can help him to ease his heart in the world (Suzuki, 1927, p. 24) because he always searched his inner peace from the external world. However, everything in the outside world was constantly changing. If outside conditions alter, the heart follows. How do people find their inner peace from the outside world? Therefore, master HuiKo figured out that if he wants to get inner-peace, he should pay attention to his own innermost nature instead of searching from outside.

This concept is similarly addressed in ‘*Where the Wild Things Are*’. Jennifer Shaddock described this story from a psychological perspective :

It is this parallel between the child’s developmental fantasies of rebellion against social codes... and Western culture’s fantasies to escape from civilized oppression to ‘primitive’ freedom (fantasies played out not just in adventure novels, but also in imperialist history) that links the psychological and the cultural readings of Wild Things. (1997, p. 156)

‘*Where the Wild Things Are*’ provides psychological development. Maurice Sendak was a second generation Poland Jewish immigrant in America. Sendak published *Where the Wild Things Are* in 1963, after World War II: the story has even been related to Jungian psychology (Lindow, 2006, p. 447). Sendak was interested in psychological development of fantasy and myth. He created the scenario of travelling to a fictional world as a metaphor for connecting to an inner channel, opening a private conversation with the self. I put this idea into *Little*

¹⁰ In Chinese character is 菩提達摩祖師. Bodhi-dharma is the first master of traditional Chinese Zen

Mouse and design an inside space inside Shadow Monster as the conversation platform with the inner self. The uncontrollable Shadow Monster is like the wild things who need to release emotion; meeting him is a chance for Little Mouse to connect into the inner channel to find the self. In Figure 2-32, I tried to draw another parallel time and space inside the Shadow Monster, where Little Mouse may enter the portal to find the Inner Monster/ the self, as a symbol to activate the ‘journey within the psyche’ (Fitzsimmons, 2004, pp. 262–270).



Figure 2-32
Little Mouse enters a mysterious world to seek Inner Monster
(author's drawing, lithograph and water colour, 2013)

2.3.2 A Story Appears: A Life-changing Journey

In this creative project, I project myself in the main character, Little Mouse, who enters a strange land and has an adventure there. In literature or folk tales, for example, in Chinese folktales, there are elves from the mountains who will lead humans into a different world which has not the same time zone as reality. In literature, the traveller experiences being lost (and also finds spiritual meaning) in the foreign land as a metaphor of the reflection on the dilemma the protagonist met, as in *The Pilgrim's Process* by John Bunyan which narrates how Christian meets many people during his journey. Some people seem to be his friends but some characters' personalities are evil or deceptive. Bunyan gave these places and characters literal meaningful names, for example, City of Destruction, Village of Morality and Mr. Worldly Wiseman. He also broke the idea of duality, creating a story which is full of allegories. Similar concepts of an adventure through a wonderland developed in classic literature and the contemporary popular fiction story. I especially look at the structure of these popular stories, for instance, '*A Wizard of Earthsea*'. In that story, Ged was running away from his hometown, Roke, and travelled to many different islands, until he met his mentor again. Then, his attitude toward the shadow was changed and he started hunting the shadow instead. Finally, he met his shadow at the edge of the world. I considered this structure of narrative and designed my story into three main stages: hometown, Light City, and Soul place.

The first question for me is why Little Mouse wants to leave his hometown and where he wants to go? My personal migration experience described above illuminate my narration: in the beginning, Little Mouse runs away from his hometown because he is afraid. But he does not know that what he fears is his Shadow Monster. Then, how does Little Mouse come to Light City? I think of the opening scene in *The Arrival* (Figure 2-33): a big ship took the immigrant to a new land. I adapted and interpret this idea in my visual narrative: a small leaf/boat carries

the passengers who seek asylum (Figure 2-34). From this setting, extends another question: where is Light City. I cannot locate any lands fitting my ideal description. Then, I think of *Howl's Moving Castle* and the other works I had read which helps me to correct my setting in Light City (See chapter three: The setting of Light City).



Figure 2-33
Harbour, from *The Arrival* (2007), by Shaun Tan, Pencil on paper



Figure 2-34
Departure
(author's drawing, lithograph and water colour, 2013)

In Light City, my protagonist will meet some friends, then, he should change his mind by someone or something that leads him to arrive into place of souls (See Chapter Three: Travelling to Light City and Considering the Relationship between the Character and the Scene). Here, my biggest question is: how does the protagonist consult with the Inner Monster? The illustrations of stages 4-6 of 'Ten Cow Herding' depict the process of cow-herders fighting with their cow as a metaphor of mental struggle (See Appendix 1: Ten Cow Herding). Stage seven shows that the division between the cow and cow-herd merges together, with no conflict and no separation. They are as one. The conflict in the beginning between human and Nature is because the human refused to acknowledge the fact that Nature exists inside us; the different perspectives cause the separation. If we break the boundary, get rid of hostility, everything may look different. I put this thought into *Little Mouse* in my final chapter, the conversation with Inner Monster, facing reality and easing the struggle, and putting the trust in the self. In Figure 2-35, I visualized it into the appearance of Inner Monster with a keyhole in the middle of the body, bleeding. Then, I thought, a key to fill this empty space could be a metaphor for the possibility of being unlocked repaired and integrated into an independent, unique personality, an undivided whole which will reform into a new life.



Figure 2-35
Inner Monster

(author's drawing, lithograph and water colour, 2013)

Finally, I asked myself, after experiencing these adventure, what prize is gained for the protagonist gained from it? Again, the answer emerges according my personal reflection: a change in thinking. As Le Guin addressed in *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Ged changed because he overcome his own fear, and moved from fleeing to hunting his shadow. I am myself also enlightened by my protagonist, Little Mouse, who, after experiencing the so-called heaven of Light City, decides he should alter his perspective and became more brave. Surely it should be an open ending for *Little Mouse*, as Shaun Tan stated in his personal website, ‘*My own aspirations as an illustrator – using that term advisedly – is to simply present the reader with ideas that are essentially silent, unexplained, and open to very broad interpretation*’ (Tan, 2010). Little Mouse continues go on his journey, but this time he is not the same person as before.

2.4 Discussion and Summary

This chapter reveals the crucial elements of the creative process which shape the picture book project, particularly my own experience, and my reflection on the issues and theories that interest me. As Elkins argued, the ‘artist’s statement’ and position in art history were major features in studio art research, because ‘*self-reflexivity could make a theme of all such breaks with art historical practice. That would not solve the problem, nor would it create a new genre, but it would let the reader have a greater share in the work*’ (2004, p24). To shape *Little Mouse*, all my previous reading experience, research projects, and personal life experience are blended as nutrients for it. The process of the idea of the exploration by *Little Mouse* as experiencing the ‘internal migrations of the soul’ (Tan, 2012, p. 12) which break of boundaries, liberate the imagination and reflect challenges of life. Experience taught me that changing environment arouses psychological shock, and may break old patterns to examine original beliefs which

interpreted into *Little Mouse*. Through reading stories of ‘psychic growth’ or ‘psychic progress’, I found that this process can reverse the trauma into psychological development (Ball, 1997, p. 168). As Aaron Kozbelt, Ronald A. Beghetto, and Mark A. Runco argued, the parallel thinking of the ‘hypothetical or as if’ can ‘*provide entry into imaginative possibilities both for theorizing and for self-understanding in everyday life*’ (2011, p. 22). Since I construct the idea of *Little Mouse* from the theories I respond to and the experience I have had, this project answered my concern, a psychological journey to integrate with the self.

The fictional world in *Little Mouse* combines my first impression of Edinburgh and my nostalgia for my homeland, which increases its richness. These ideas were all deeply related to my multicultural background and cross-cultural experience. This ‘individual migration experience’ showed me cultural diversity, but also led me to realize that theories of the self, such as Jungian, Individuation and Zen Buddhism, from different culture, have some similarity inside (Butler, 2001, p. 192). These similar elements become the basic structure in my story which expresses my core metaphor- a life-changing journey. I borrowed some ideas from multicultural art productions as the ingredients both visual and ideal in constructing the fiction world of *Little Mouse*.¹¹ An imaginary world, like a metaphor for reality, is my ideal expression for this story. When the reader becomes involved in this fictional world, they can enjoy the surprise of culture differences, but they will discover this foreign place is not a completely strange land.

¹¹ As Robert D. Sutherland suggested, it was useful to survey the relevant context in literature to see ‘what value, attitudes and assumptions’ apply to the creator’s work (1985, p. 154).

As an artist from Taiwan, the experience of migration to Scotland and experiencing education here provided a foundation for me to compare, and feel the difference in cultures. Moreover, with the multicultural experience there came be a chance for me to gain insight and creative ideas for an artist. Creativity is connected with intercultural contact; how does the creator become aware of and access this benefit (Leung et al., 2008, p. 172-179)? Esi Abbam Elliot and Cheryl Nakata point out, '*creativity is culturally attached and impacts innovation practices*' and is like an '*interdisciplinary magnet, drawing interest from psychology, education, and art theory among others*' (2013, pp. 112–122). Most importantly, it appears in how the artist expresses many 'nuances and interpretations' (Kozbelt et al., 2011, p. 23). It is strongly correlated with the attitude of creators and how they deal with challenges. Mark. A. Runco and Robert S. Albert indicated that '*one role of importance that creativity has had since Darwin was in solving problems and "successful" adaptations, "individual" in character*' (2011, p. 12). The artist exposes that the multicultural environment could positively enhance creativity because it can shift perspective and increase adaption ability (Lubart, 2011, p. 276). This exploratory process is experienced as 'modification, elaboration, and transformation', and shaped my ideas in creating *Little Mouse* (Leung et al., 2008, p. 171).

I am both an artist and researcher, I have the advantage of observing the creative process over researchers who do not have experience of actively creating. But I must admit that, during the creative period, a lot of things were relatively vague and changeable when I was faced with a lot of information, thinking and decision-making. Developing the ideas at the starting stage of *Little Mouse*, I drew constantly and read the relevant texts several times; these two actions have a mutual relationship: sometimes my research influenced my understanding of drawings, and sometimes my drawings expanded my research (See Chapter Three). I had a better position to clarify the important factors for my creation when I had finished it, and then looked back to

re-analyse. It is difficult to study the creative process, even for the artist. In the next chapter, I discuss the practical process of creating the fiction of *Little Mouse*, as a response to the issues with which I have been concerned in this chapter.

Chapter 3

A Practice-based Approach to A Journey to Create *Little Mouse*

In the last chapter, I used practice-led research to explore my question of the life-changing journey by shaping the story of *Little Mouse*. This chapter applies the principle of practice-based research to discuss the creative process, focusing on the creative works and the dynamic between creator and the practical works to explore the ‘learning outcome’, ‘evidence of achievement’, and ‘reflective statements’ (Gray and Malins, 2004, pp. 163–164). This research methodology is not quantitative, rather making and reflecting from and psychological experience to approach the final outcome (Carabine, 2013, p. 34). Usually, my creative process follows a pattern back and forth between the research to create artwork and from the artwork to find the concept within. Dallas J. Baker, a scholar of creative writing and cultural studies, described the dynamic: ‘*Research informs practice, practice leads research, research inspires practice and practice inspires research*’ (2011, p. 35). In my experience, creative action produces further questions, the question triggers the artist/researcher to explore the methods to respond to it, and through the problem-solving mechanism builds on the original research

material to generate my knowledge. Nithikul Nimkulrat suggested that ‘*Research questions generally originate from within practice... to answer the research questions, the artistic production and experience—but facts and feelings— [are] captured, [in] visual or textual formats. The captured visuals and text become data that can be used as research material.*’ (2007b, p. 2)

The creative process is constantly under revision and is amended using different materials and theories progressively during the periods (Lewis, 2001, p. 94). As Chapter Two discussed content and the ideas behind the picture book, this chapter explores the process of implementation. Creative processes twist and affect each other. Usually, it begins with a simple interest or question. Then, I visualize it with illustrations and look for more evidence to dig further. Then, the process restarts to move back and forth to create the new images. After that, I become clearer about the story inside by connecting these images together as the link to push the story to move on.

3.1 Story Background Settings

I found that establishing the basic settings before writing the story makes it much easier to construct the story and enrich the detail of the storytelling. It lets the story have its roots under the ground. Before *Little Mouse*, I tended to skip the stage of basic setting, and to directly engage creating the story. However, I found it difficult this time to handle a complex fictional story without a series of detailed mise-en-scène, since these provide a foundation on which the creator can design the plot. I divided the settings into three broad categories to discuss: role, scene, and background story.

3.1.1 Developing Characters

I found that the experience of travel and emigration to a foreign country did help me to increase my creativity. For example, I used the first scenes I visited and the friends or people I met during the journey as my visual sources; they became important elements in my sketch book. I reviewed these doodle drawings, to improve them into anthropomorphic characters and to give them names.

The first challenge for me is how to make the character vivid? Creating a fictional creature is not hard, but how to make it unique and individual. I used a few simple sentences describing the basic personalities of Little Mouse, Moon-cat, and Mr. Wolf. I gave them clothes and accessories to increase their identity and personality (Figure 3.1 ~ 3-3). The next questions were, who are they, and what is their relationship? There must be some history and culture to make them what they are now. Also, each of them should have a certain dramatic connection. So, I drew a sketch to depict their relationships and narrated a simple history for each of them in the supporting settings. (Figure 3-4)

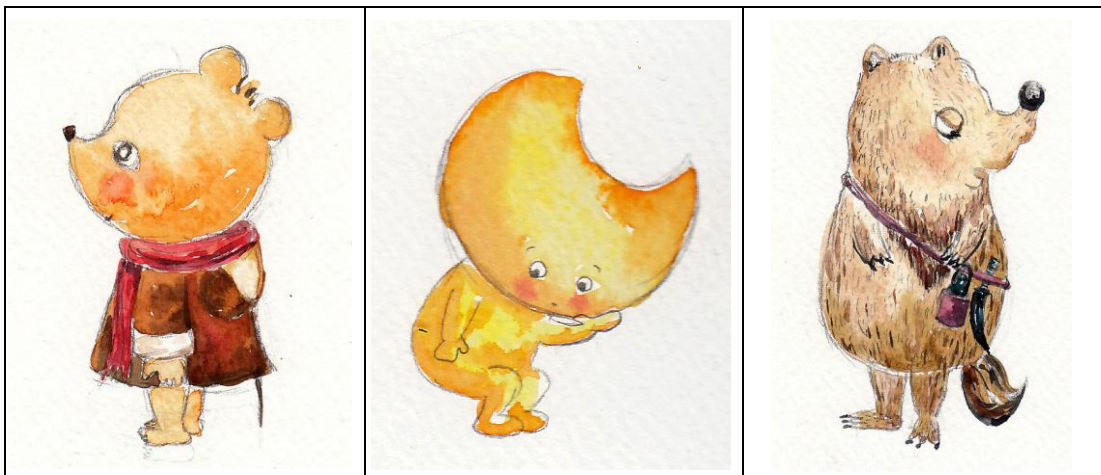


Figure 3-1
Little Mouse
(author's drawing, 2012)

Figure 3-2
Moon-cat
(author's drawing, 2012)

Figure 3-3
Mr. Wolf
(author's drawing, 2012)

3.1.2 A Fictional World and its Landscape

The 'secondary world' represents a form of culture and creativity hybridization, and a virtual space for escapism (Satoshi, 2008, p. 23). The term was invented by J. R. R. Tolkien in his essay, *Tree and Leaf* (1964), though it had existed in Romantic Literature for much longer. Tolkien created 'Middle-Earth' in *The Lord of the Rings* as a secondary world, and C. S. Lewis built 'Narnia' in *The Chronicles of Narnia – The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), *Prince Caspian* (1951), *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952), *The Silver Chair* (1953), *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), *The Magician's Nephew* (1955), and *The Last Battle* (1956). These fantasy worlds differ from our own in race, language, religion, culture, landscape; magic is possible. Most importantly, they express the desires and thoughts of the author. I always wondered how they build such massive and attractive worlds, and how I can learn from this and apply it to *Little Mouse*. Clearly, these settings are adapted from human culture and the world we live in, and blend in the desires and imagination of the writer. Shaun Tan pointed out in 2012 that the details and scope of the fictitious world he created in *The Arrival* came from 'culture, nature, family, belief, work, play, language, all these things are flexible realities...' (2012, p. 5). The world of *Little Mouse* is adapted from the ideas of Shaun Tan and mixed with my observations made when I arrived in Edinburgh for the first time, such as the housing and buildings, the landscape, the interior of my flat and the festival I attended. The scenes in *Little Mouse* mixed the landscape of Edinburgh and my illusion of Taiwan. So the world of *Little Mouse* comes from my past and present and is built from observation; it blends the multiple cultures which I had experienced. As Martin Salisbury suggested 'If you are to believe in what you are creating, it makes sense that it should come from a place that you know, whether it be a physical or an emotional place, external or internal' (Salisbury, 2004, p. 76). A good fiction must establish a relative reality which shows in the characters, scene and plot, and 'settings can also be an essential part of the plot development' (Nikolajeva, 2002, p. 91).

I re-interpreted scenes in my photos and sketches from the places I travelled, to set up the *mise-en-scène* (see Figure 3-5). The challenge was how to use these fragments of scenes; how I could organize them to come together? I decided to borrow an idea from Tolkien and Ursula Le Guin by using a map to extend the narration and create my secondary world (Figure 3-6). I concluded from studying their work that a successful secondary world needs four main dimensions: time setting, distance setting, environment setting, and a plan of the culture. First, the time setting is about time zones and the map, or how to measure time in this secondary universe. Next, I marked out the geographical position of the fantasy world, how far for connecting two locations and I also considered the different features of each land, its environment. Last, I thought about four main points to clarify my cultural setting: food, clothes, way of living, and transportation. I asked myself what would people in my secondary residence eat? What would they wear? Is there any feature for their clothes? Then, where do they live; in a cottage, a farm, a house, or a flat? Is there any transportation system, such as bicycles, cars, spaceships or trains? Finally, is there any belief system or religion for them?

Throughout the process of creating the map, more and more questions appear about my secondary world: where do my characters live, how do they travel, who are their friends, they met, what difficulties they encounter; and most importantly, what are the secrets of these land? Creating a map in fact increases the number of questions. But the more questions I answered, the clearer I was about my world. With this background in place, I started to select parts of it for my story and to connect it with characters.

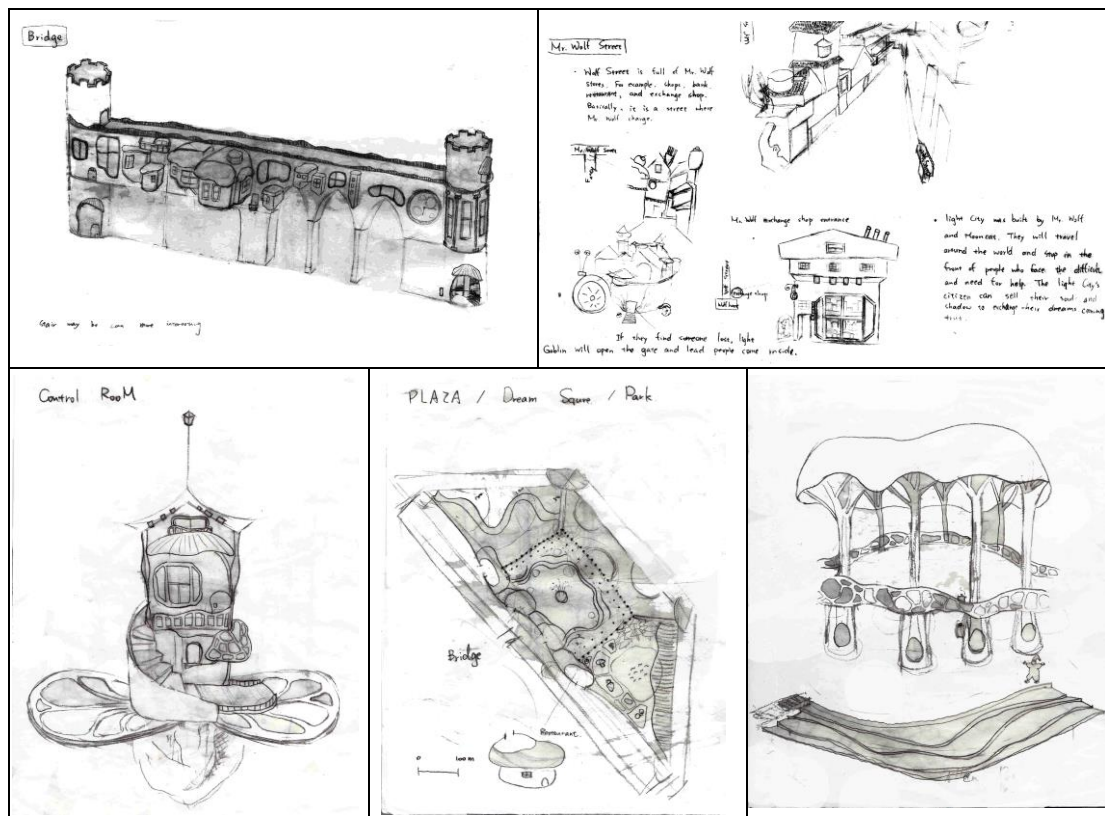


Figure 3-5
Sketches of scenes to set up the mise-en-scène
(author's drawing, 2012)



Figure 3-6
The world map in *Little Mouse*
(author's drawing, 2013)

(A) The Original Setting of Light City

Little Mouse is a story of a journey: the protagonist must leave his hometown and go to another place to complete his spiritual test. The destination should be a special place where fits his ideal land, a utopia (See Chapter Two). I could think at first of no place that fit this qualification. So I looked at similar scenarios from the previous fantasy works I had read such as *Howl's Moving Castle* (Hayao Miyazaki's film) and *The Chronicles of Narnia* (C. S. Lewis). It occurs me that most of these design the setting as having a portal, for the character on the quest to pass through. This special land should be mobile, for instance a plane, submarine or spaceship, so it can actively approach the seekers.

Then, what does this different land looks like? During my early days in Edinburgh, everything was fresh for me, even ordinary stone walls, the streets seemed full of charm. I sketched some of the landscape and noticed that Edinburgh Castle, a fortified building on a huge volcanic rock, seemed naturally to be like an independent society. In my imagination, Edinburgh Castle turned into the image of my ideal place, Light City. (see Figure 3-7)

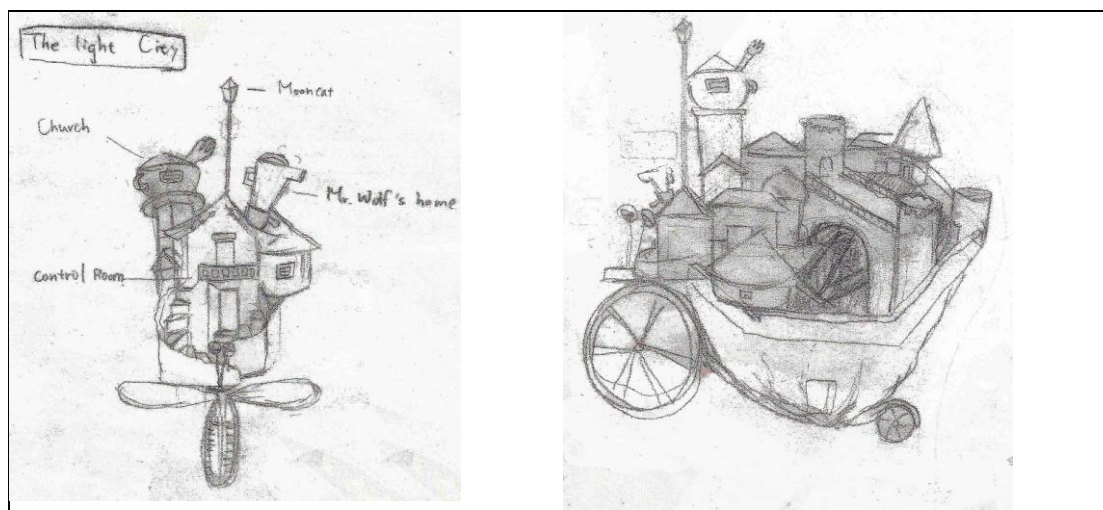


Figure 3-7
Early sketches of Light City
(author's drawing, 2013)

(B) Travelling to Light City

To Enter a foreign land, you need proof of identity. This concept was new for me the first time I travelled alone to UK, and I was fascinated by the passengers waiting in line to be checked by the customs officers. I blended my experience of travel and customs: the airport sets up a security check. After that, outside the airport, it is a whole new world. I transferred this experience into *Little Mouse* I drew: the scenes of checking procedures for entering Light City, also, I increased the role of the gate-keeper (Figure3-8). My gate-keeper is like an owl, but I depict his action as a customs officer.

Then, how to become one of the residents? In *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki designed the detail where the owner of the Bath House deprives the workers of their names before compelling them to work in the Bath House. I adapted this idea: Little Mouse needs to sign a contract and abandons his name before entering Light-City (Figure 3-9).

In *His Dark Materials - Northern Lights* (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000), Philip Pullman describes a surgery to divide the dust and the children, and I transferred this into the scene in *Little Mouse: Purgation Fall*. I designed a machine to take out the shadow. Then, the following question occurred to me: where will the shadow be taken? In the original setting, Light City was a welcoming, friendly, and bright city which is quite different from a mechanised city. So I planted some natural elements to cover the cold and ugly machines with trees and beautiful waterfalls. As Chapter Two discussed, this changed design makes Light City pass from utopia into dystopia; eventually, the reader learns about where the shadows go: to a machine factory (Figure 3-10). My initial idea of the machine factory comes from a water treatment project added to by my imagination. However, it seemed too visually complicated, so I combined the tree with the bottle-like machine as a natural

disguise for evil.



Figure 3-8
The Gate-keeper
(author's drawing, 2013)

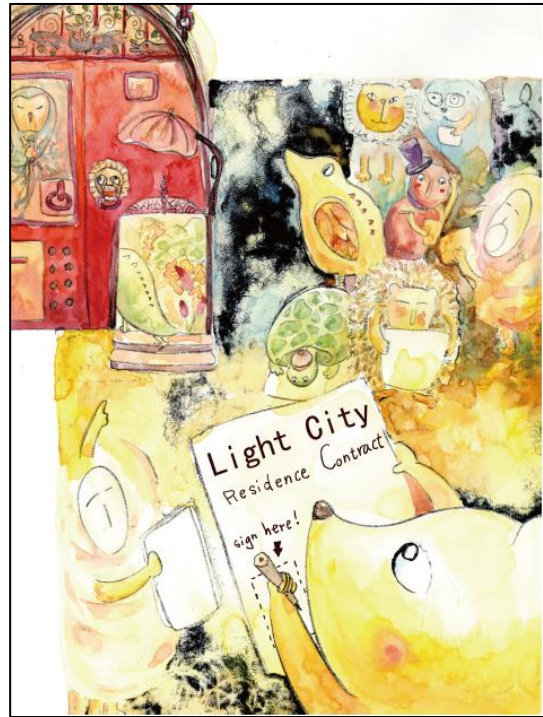


Figure 3-9
Sign the contract
(author's drawing, 2013)

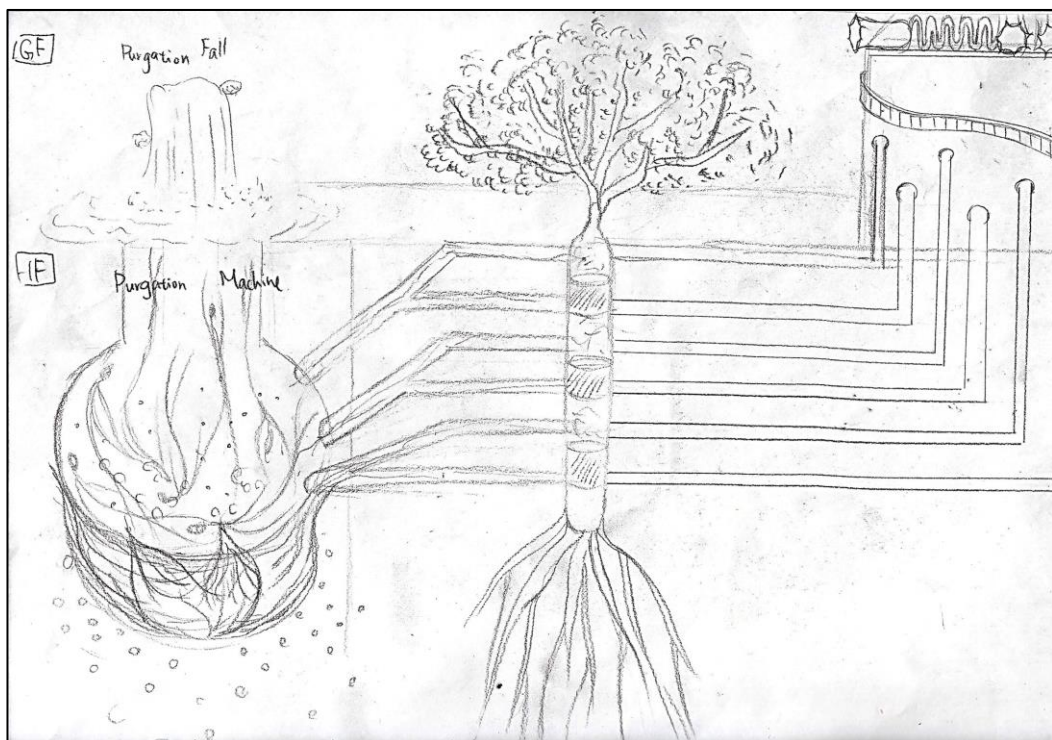


Figure 3-10
Concept of The Machine Factory in *Little Mouse*
(author's drawing, 2012)

(C) Exploring the Scene in Light City with a Simple Map

Visually perspective, I intended *Little Mouse* to create scenes similar to the illustrations in *The Arrival*, a seemingly familiar but strange world. My next challenge was how to organize images and concepts which had as yet no specific time and location. Using the experience of designing a world map of *Little Mouse*, I decided to make a city map, including a basic plan and urban design. A city has several basic elements: the administrative centre, business centre, parks, resident area and roads (Figure 3-11). I studied the map of old Edinburgh. I found my city map needed to consider function, such as where the residents live, what kind of society they are, and how to link the ground and underground levels in Light City. This map helped me to have a bird's eye view and planned the adventure route in my story. After that, I could easily site the missing scenes in *Little Mouse*, such as the lounge, market, Goo's home, urban walkways, bridges, the plaza and Secret Chamber of Mr. Wolf. So I filled in the missing parts.

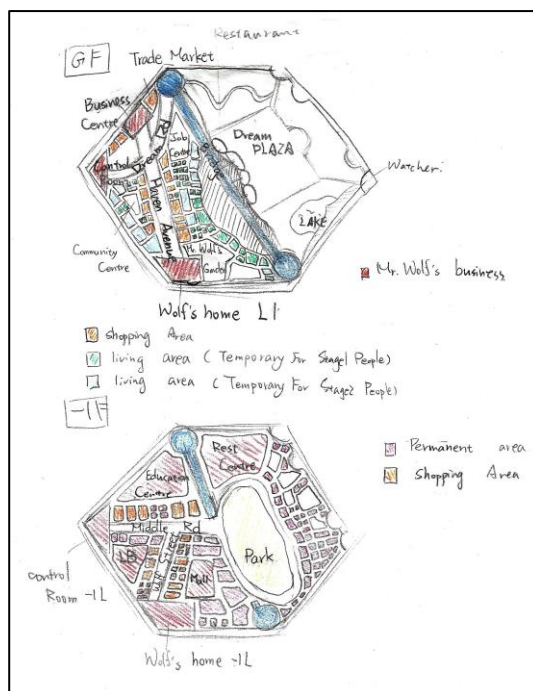


Figure 3-11
The linear connection in *Little Mouse*
(author's drawing, 2012)

The scenes of the city mostly come from first hand experience of Edinburgh, Spain, and Taiwan, such as the traditional markets in Taiwan, the British pub and the Spanish market. The idea of the Light Festival is based partially on Guell Park in Barcelona and partly from my imagination (Figure 3-12, 3-13). The street and bridge scenes came from my observation of York and South Bridge in Edinburgh. I adapted images of some Spanish traditional brick buildings with large windows, and mixed them with Taiwanese traditional buildings to create Goo's home. The idea of the secret chamber of Mr. Wolf came from the traditional Chinese medicine shop in Taiwan and Edinburgh's Museum of Childhood (Figure 3-14, 3-15).

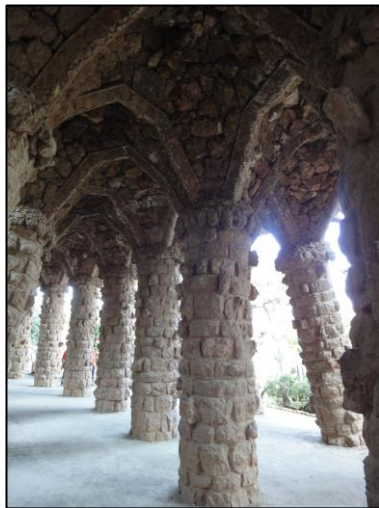


Figure 3-12
Guell Park, Barcelona
(author's photo, 2013)



Figure 3-13
A draft of the scene of Light Festival
(author's drawing, 2013)



Figure 3-14
The demonstration in Edinburgh children
Museum (author's photo, 2013)

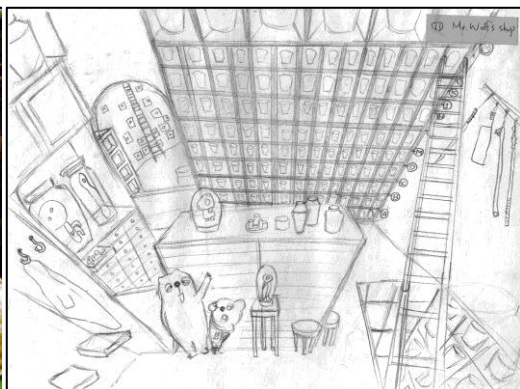


Figure 3-15
A draft of the secret chamber of Mr. Wolf
(author's drawing, 2013)

(D) Considering the Relationship Between the Character and the Scene

The interior design of a home implied the personalities of characters, and could move the plot. For example, what does Goo's home look like? I had to ponder his personality, habits and taste. Originally, I made Goo relatively flexible, friendly to others with an open mind. Goo's room reflects his personality: messy. In Figure 3-16 we can see, I planted a spider web in the corner with many thick dark textures around the room. Another example is Mr. Wolf: he follows a discipline of strong beliefs. I imagined this personality would extend into his daily life, so the scenes of the secret chamber are more organised and tidy (Figure 3-17). I changed my drawing into relatively straight lines to depict his shop.

The creation of the *mise-en-scène* required physical observation, of appearance but also of body movements, touch, using feeling to capture unique elements. I found the field research was beneficial for sharpening my senses and improving my observation. When it comes to merging the scenes and characters, the creator should put himself/herself into the shoes of the character, and use memories to produce imagination. Creativity is connected to observation and the ability to adapt and transform of the artist.



Figure 3-16
Goo's flat
 (author's drawing, 2012)

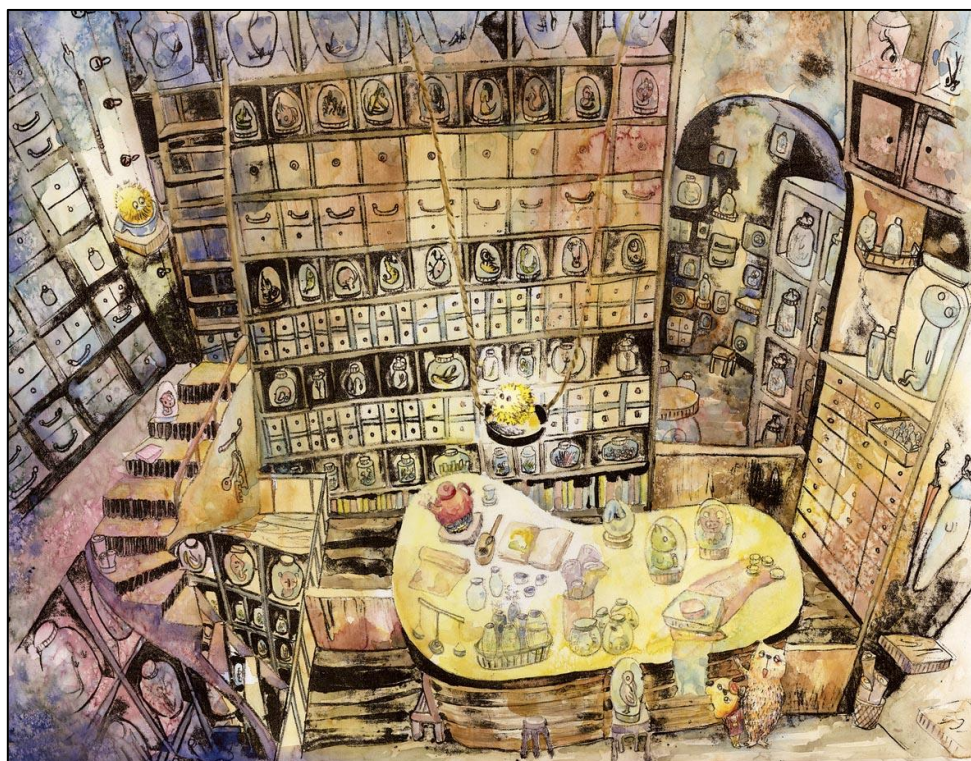


Figure 3-17
The secret chamber of Mr. Wolf
 (author's drawing, 2014)

3.1.3 Place a Culture and History Within

A convincing fictional world must take into account its culture in history, race, religion and belief. In fantasy literature and film, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *His Dark Material*, writers create folklore, mythology, fairy tales and literature to support a culture's style, even including language, food, and clothes. These details do not need to be completely innovative, but may be referenced from different historical or cultural narratives.

The narrative trajectory traces back into the culture of folklore and fairy tale. Jack Zipes describes how folklore comes from 'tribe, community, or society,' and folk tales originate from 'ritual, customs, and beliefs of tribes, communities, and trades' (1991, pp. XV, XII). Fairy tales - later, literary adaptations based in folktale elements - are great prototypes to inspire creative works, in narrative (Hawkes, 2003, p. 62).

The history and nature of fairy tales is a broad topic. Marina Warner proposed a metaphor to help us to locate ourselves in the world of fairy tales from the European perspective. She said,

Imagine the history of fairy tale as a map, like the Carte du Tendre, the 'Map of Tenderness' ... and you will first see two prominent landmarks, Charles Perrault's Histories et Contes du temps Passé (Tales of Olden Times, 1697) and a little nearer in the foreground, the Grimm Brothers' Kinder- und Hausmärchen (children's and Household Tales, 1812-57).

She also pointed out a few 'landmarks' of the web spreading out points on this imagined map: further east is 'One Thousand and One Nights'; then it heads to the north for Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen¹ (1805-1875); next turns to the east to the Russian storyteller

¹ Hans Christian Andersen created a series of fairy tales with imagination, for instance, The Little Mermaid, The Snow Queen, The Ugly Duckling, The Nightingale, and The Emperor's New Clothes.

Alexander Afanasyev (1826-1871); and from this links to the central Asian area. These stories become the ‘creative content providers’ for contemporary storytellers to invent, interpret, and revision (Warner, 2014, pp. xiv–xv).

Like the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) view of every true history is contemporary history (Conati, 2015; Croce, 1921), from the view of modern storyteller, we might say ‘*all fairy tales are contemporary fairy tales*’ since every generation reworks this material. The 21st century story teller sees classic fairy tales as a data source for creation: one trend in contemporary fairy tale telling is to blur the boundaries of individual classic fairy tales to create a larger scale and incorporated story. For example, the American TV drama series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-) by ABC Studio mashed up Western classical fairy tales, reorganized motifs and fragments of stories and updated the whole as a massive and complex contemporary fiction; the American TV drama series *Grimm* (2011-) by Universal Television adapted the fictional characters of the Grimm Brothers, blending the present reality and reorganizing them into a large-scale new urban fairy tale. After J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* (1954), many writers began to integrate the various cultures of mythology, folklore, religion and history to create whole new worlds of fantasy stories. Contemporary popular novels- for example, *Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowling and *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George Martin often merge various cultural elements and form into a new world, adapting from myths, literature, history, folklore, fairy tales. The artists extract, convert, subvert, and reset the elements from several resources, then reform them into new works.

Another feature of contemporary fairy tales is complication through the post-modern context. They are interpreted with different levels, from different points of view, and from the classic stories. The American animated fantasy-comedy film ‘*Shrek*’ directed by Andrew Adamson

and Vicky Jensen in 2001, for instance, took the former popular Disney's protagonists as a mock target, which fits one post-modern feature, 'parody' or 'irony'. The American fantasy film '*Maleficent*' directed by Robert Stromberg in 2014 repackaged '*Sleeping Beauty*' (from the version by Charles Perrault, 1696), from the perspective of the 'evil fairy'.

The third important feature of contemporary fairy tale in my view is cross-cultural interpretation. For example, both the animated films *Mulan* (1998) directed by Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook, and *Kung Fu Panda* (2008) directed by Mark Osborne and John Stevenson adapted elements from Chinese folk tales but 'Americanized' them. These two cases demonstrate how American media blends from different cultural sources into the text then make 'narrative transparency' to export a hybrid cultural creation (Olson, 2004, p. 116). Susan J. Napier considers that, when a fairy tale or piece of folklore is accessed by other cultures, the cross-cultural translation can generate a more abundant and diverse creation (2006, p. 308).

Based on above discussion, I start to consider the popular culture in the world of *Little Mouse* from the fairy tale, folklore, and myth: why is everyone afraid of the Shadow Monster (See Chapter Two). This must connect to the belief system. So I researched some creation stories to create a Myth of the Golden Age in *Little Mouse*. I looked at the Chinese creation myth Pangu legend² and Nüwa,³ Japanese myth of Izanagi and Izanami-no-Mikoto,⁴ and Kronos

² Pangu (盤古) was described as the first giant in the beginning of world, its/his body expands with the expansion of the world. After he dies, his body decomposes into the essential materials in the world. (Yuan (袁), 1998, pp. 70–76)

³ Nüwa (女媧) is a goddess who has a human head with snake body. According to Chinese myth, she created human beings from mud. (Yuan (袁), 1998, pp. 77–86)

⁴ The God and Goddess Izanagi and Izanami-no-Mikoto married and gave birth to many children who became the islands of Japan. (Phillipi, 1969, p. 66)

from Greek myth. These myths of the cosmos are mapped on to the natural environment and express the primal desires of human beings. Their roots in culture can be found in folklore, song, art, custom and religion. For example, the custom of the Donggang King Boat Ceremony in Taiwan is believed to expel the plague by burning a boat on the sea (Li (李), 1993); in Edinburgh, I experienced the Beltane Fire Festival which represents sending away the winter and welcoming the summer (Matheson et al., 2014). I could connect and compare these two cases, so that I became aware of the similar elements in them – the concept of sending away, and fire as an important symbol for the ceremonies. I was impressed by these concepts, and I interpreted certain elements of them into *Little Mouse*, as my fire festival.

I use many different approaches to accomplish the fictional world settings of *Little Mouse*: ‘the key concept’ to extend the research, the ‘map’ to have full-view, the ‘fieldtrip’ to acquire the physical experience of five senses. These helped me to increase the depth of the fictional world. Second, ‘asking questions’ of the story can explore more details to construct the world. I found benefits from both visual and narrative practice approaches, and their interaction pushed my creativity further.

3.2 Narration of the Story and the Storyboard

3.2.1 Literary Tone and Style

Before drawing the storyboard, deciding on the major events of the story was my priority: setting up the plot, introducing the subplot, portraying the characters, showing the relationships between characters, and designing the conflict in the plot. And I had to think about the perspective of the narrator (Lassen-Seger, 2002, p. 159).

Literary tone expresses the writer's attitude to the work; it must fit the theme, or the core issues, and the implied messages of the author to the audience. My attitude towards the core issue in *Little Mouse* is similar to Saint-Exupéry's in '*The Little Prince*'. He used simple words to reflect, feel and arouse empathy (Steadman, 2012, p. 98), and I have also tried to do this. L. A. Triebel said the work of Saint-Exupéry is 'animated by the love of men and the quest for the essential human elements' (1951, p. 92). Leon S. Roudiez further pointed out '...his never-ending efforts to find a meaning for life- a struggle that is evident in practically all of his work' (1958, p. 26-29). I am particularly interested in Saint-Exupéry's statement of the relationship between his writing and his own mind, as translated by Lewis Galantiere (Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942),

I had always assumed that the ordeal, when it came, would be an ordeal that concerned my flesh. My flesh alone, I assumed, would be subjected to the ordeal. It was unavoidable that in thinking of these things I should adopt the point of view of my body. Like all men, I had given it a good deal of time. I had dressed it, bathed it, fed it, quenched its thirst. I had identified myself with this domesticated animal. I had taken it to the tailor, the surgeon, the barber. I had been unhappy with it, cried out in pain with it, loved with it. I had said of it, 'This is me.' And now of a sudden my illusion vanished. (Lill, 1978, p. 855)

From this statement, we can see how the writing of Saint-Exupéry was deeply bound up with his life experience and his reflection on that. As in '*The Little Prince*', *Little Mouse* is based on my own experience to narrate a journey, including migration, loneliness, isolated, vulnerable, and the emotion of melancholy. I tried to build these characters and places as expressions of myself as a human being to reflect on my questions and discuss them through this picture book. The tone I adopted is one of questioning, wonderment, and reflective.

The idea of the 'fable' is also present in *The Little Prince* and this extends into my concept to shape my theme. Fable, the didactic lesson delivered through an apparently simple story, a form which once occupied the thoughts of mature man hood' (Smith, 1915, p. 519). *The Little Prince* tells a fable of the war era which reveals a conflict of emotions; uncertainty, insecure and loneliness from the conversation between Little Prince and the pilot with the anthropomorphic animals (Gopnik, 2014). In contemporary criticism, discussion of *The Little Prince* linked this moral parable with the Bible as a moral teaching lesson (Bazhenova et al., 2015, pp. 435–440). I adapted the idea of allegory from the fable or parable into modelling my character, such as Shadow Monster can be a visual exemplar to the concept of shadow/cow from Jung/ *Ten Cow Herding*. The whole journey Little Mouse experiences in his story is my interpretation of Individuation.

I am fascinated by the double metaphor in *The Little Prince*. The character, Little Prince, emerges from Saint-Exupéry's imagination. This character reminds me of childhood and the time when I was innocent, secure and happy; the pilot represents the adult that child will become. I was inspired by this and imported the style directly into the conversation between Little Mouse, Goo and Mr. Wolf. In some points, they all represented the different voices in my head. In *Little Mouse*, this symbolic character who spoke and questioned life for me, I had

a tool to explore a more mature spirit.

Saint-Exupéry integrates both verbal and graphics into *The Little Prince* to unveil his ‘unique system of communication’. As Claire Malarte-Feldman commented ‘words obscure the truth the same way appearances veil what is essential’ (2006, p. 23-34). Saint-Exupéry ‘s illustrations act as an important code for the reader.

Following this concept, I chose a small mouse with a timid voice as the surrogate of myself to narrate this adventure journey in both verbal and visual terms. This journey reflected a lost, anxious, lonely, and bewildered stranger exploring shadow and encountering his self. As Chapter Two discussed, in my fictional world, the shadow, at first, is like a villain. Through the journey, the issue of whether the shadow is good or evil is discussed from different perspectives. My major theme in this work is the ‘journey of changed thinking’. I used simple language to express my questions about the shadow, to heighten the sense of these questions as common difficulties for a human being.

In the visual work, I tried to convey the inner thought and express emotion through the detail of the character’s actions, the background settings, and most importantly, using colour combined with dark and delicate lines. For example, the scene in figure 3.14, is based on my flat, and mixed with my feelings of insecurity and confusion during the first year living in Edinburgh. In figure 3.14, Little Mouse holds his head in his hands, and seems to be looking in wonder at the world outside through the balcony. In figure 3.16, I used the unique texture of stone lithography to express the emotions of depression and anger of the Shadow Monster. Through my visual work, the colour, the composition, and the expression of the characters implied uncertainty, confusion, and depression in a foreign land. After the true face of the

Shadow Monster is uncovered, the colour changes to suggest the change in thinking, and everything looked brighter.

3.2.2 Story Narration

(A) From the Image to Extending the Narrative

Inspired by ‘Visual Thinking Strategies’ (VTS), I adapted this theory analysing my visual and literal creativity (Moeller et al., 2013, p. 57). VTS is a research method that used in art to ‘stimulate critical thinking, communication skills, and visual literacy’ (Lukehart, 2010, p. 18). It is a method to apply in an art group by asking open-ended questions. I took part of the theory and turned it to interpret of my work: the first step is description, ‘what’s going on in this picture?’. Then I extended it to discuss, ‘what do you see that makes you say that?’ Third: interpretation, the visual evidence may triangle personal experience and evoke a story. The final question is: ‘what else can you find?’ (Lukehart, 2010). I found this method helped me to gather more ideas from the images I created. For example, I drew a huge monster destroying a city (Figure 3-18). I put some words beside the image: *‘the shadow monster has long been repressed. As soon as he is released, his anger is so big as to destroy the city.’* This picture was directly based on of C. G. Jung’s is discussion of the shadow. I wondered where these emotions came from and how they related to me. So based on this image, my research started with what Redon called ‘the dual preliminary concepts’ of psychological darkness (Redon, 1898, pp. 33–35).



Figure 3-18
The Shadow Monster destroyed Light City
(author's drawing, 2012)

Then, I used VTS and asked myself 'what more I can find' from this image. From figure 3-16, the second idea that came to my mind was the 'noir' works of Odilon Redon, the monsters with sympathetic personalities. Asked in an interview what his favourite works were, Redon responded: *'My monsters. I believe that it is there that I have given my most personal note'* (Bordeaux, 1893). In Redon's charcoal and lithograph works, his monsters are diverse creatures shaped into unique variants. From the research of chapter two, I visualized my Shadow Monster as a parallel to the human psychology of the darkness- loneliness, depression, pain, irritation, hopelessness and all negative emotions deeply rooted inside in our hearts; it represents the part of the self which civilized humans condemn and dislike. I decided to use this 'Shadow Monster' as the main topic running right through the story of *Little Mouse*. This idea links with my other research and reading: Tolkien used One Ring to symbolize evil;

Ursula Le Guin used ‘shadow’ as a metaphor in *A Wizard of Earthsea*; Philip Pullman used the ‘dust’ as a core puzzle to narrate the story in the first book of his trilogy. All through the adventure, the reader is like a detective who follows the clues, forming a mind map and becoming ever closer to the truth.

Then, I draw several key images of Shadow Monster (Figure 3-19) and, I wrote some sentences beside each illustration. This helped me to explore the possibilities of the story and raised more questions about the characters. For instance, beside the Figure 3-17, I wrote ‘*Monster home invasion and occupation, the little mouse unable to watch it all.*’; beside Figure 3-20 ‘*The Shadow Monster can’t endure the sadness, and then he exploded.*’



Figure 3-19
Shadow Monster Invasion
(author's drawing, 2012)



Figure 3-20
The sad Shadow Monster
(author's drawing, 2012)

I pinned these illustrations with their text onto the wall, and communicated with myself through the images. This method of ‘image-devinettes’ was used by Redon to link his ideas. It demonstrates a ‘state of mind’ and opens up a communication with the self and the subconscious. This process can be turned into creativity for artists by interpreting internalised icons within (Gamboni, 2007a, p. 783). A similar method is suggested by Pat B. Allen, the artist, theorist and art therapist. She used ‘Active imagination’ to raise an issue or question, and recoup a story from the owner’s past and experience. She argues that art is a way of knowing the self (1995, pp. 82–83). The visual elements in the picture allow the artist to reflect on life experience, the issues/questions he or she might have, or to convey some messages which may come from the unconscious. For example, in Figures 3-16, 3-17, and 3-18, I sense

a great emotion within myself, and after the research (See section 2.2), I was aware of this image as deeply related to myself. From my drawings and captions, I found that Shadow Monster is just a surrogate of my own darkness. Figure 3-18 also shows me that there must be story between Shadow Monster and Moon-cat, and this led me to explore the narrative future.

(B) Design the Basic Structure

After finishing several key images and exploring the messages inside, the next step was to design their links. The first question which should be asked is what happen to the protagonist, Little Mouse, and what this image means to him? From the discussion in the chapter two, I had many ideas about *Little Mouse*; however, how to transfer this material into narration was a big challenge for me. Vladimir Propp (1895-1970), a Russian scholar of the folk tale, analysed fairy tales and deconstructed them according to the ‘functions’ inside the tales: he argued ‘*when a tale comprises two parties⁵ (of which one includes the pair ‘struggle’- ‘victory,’ and the other ‘difficult task’ - ‘solution’), these pairs are always in the first parties, ‘difficult task’- ‘solution,’ in the second. Moreover, the two parties are linked by an initial function, common to both*’ (1984a, p. 172). He shows a possible universal foundation on which the narration of fairy tales can be built (Jones and McBeth, 2010, pp. 331–332). Working with the ideas of Propp, I found that the morphology of these journey-related stories can be summarized into three main steps: leaving, adventure in a foreign land, and the return. I also considered the statement of Propp and the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss⁶ (1908-

⁵ By two parties, Propp means that the pairs are linked in their initial function.

⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss was the first scholar to introduce Propp’s theory of Morphology. In his article, *Structure and Form Reflections on a Work by Vladimir Propp* (1960), he suggested that Propp should expand his research data-base into myth, and offered his own anthropological research to simplify and modify the theory of Propp.

2009), that a hero's journey begins with two situations of separation: *'(1) appeal to the seeker-hero, the hero's departure on a quest; or (2) dismissal of the victim-hero and the perils to which he or she is exposed'* (Propp, 1984b, p. 171). Then, the hero meets a 'benefactor', whose appearance may be good or bad, during the journey. After the hero has defeated the villain, whether it is a visible character or a character of the imagination, with the help of this 'benefactor', the reward is the identification as a hero (Propp, 1984a, p. 171). This led to the basic outline of the story: Little Mouse escapes his home because he wants to avoid his Shadow Monster. Then, he arrives in a foreign place and meets the residents of Light City, Goo and Mr. Wolf, who act as benefactors, providing different perspectives on the Shadow Monster. Finally, he confronts the monster recognises it, feels empathy for it, and releases it.

I had to consider several events to make Little Mouse as a hero adventurer. According to Propp and Lévi-Strauss who argued that, *'A tale can comprise several parties.... The parties may follow each other, or one may be inserted in another, interrupting its development, while it is itself subjected to the same type of interruption'* (Propp, 1984b, p. 173). I found drawing a time line for the story is helpful, making it clear what each party/event will be. (Figure 3-21) I separated the story into six parties/events: Arriving, Light City, Light Festival, Shadow Keeper, and Shadow Monster and Inner Monster.

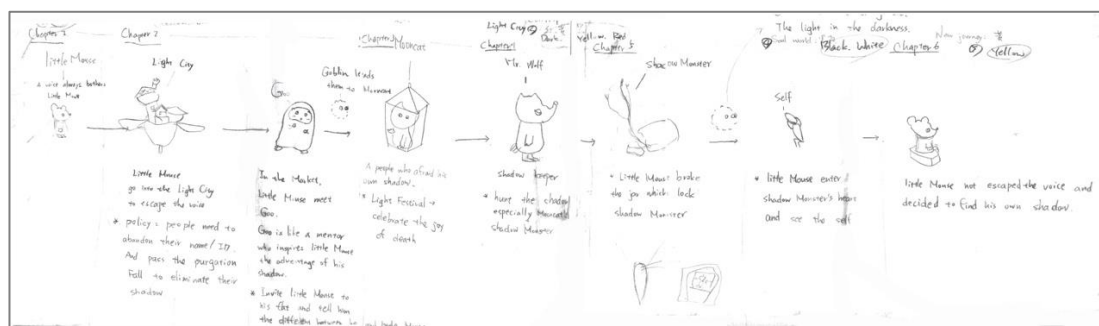


Figure 3-21
The draft of story's timeline
(author's drawing, 2012)

Then I connected these events into a complete story and linked back to the initial question- what is the Shadow Monster. I drew each character in order of appearance and considered details to weave the background settings with the events: how they meet, how they provide clues to help Little Mouse (Figure 3-19). To obtain a more solid picture of the other roles and their personalities, I wrote each character's background story and considered the relationships among them (see Section 3.1.1). As Propp argued, '*Motivations are all reasons and aims of characters which give rise to their deeds*' (1984, p. 172). I arranged that in my story: Little Mouse had strong doubts about the nature of his Shadow Monster, so he went on the journey to search for the answer. Exploring the truth is the greatest motivation for Little Mouse. Everything he did was in order to clarify the secret of the Shadow Monster. Other characters play important roles to guide Little Mouse in his approach to his question: what is the Shadow Monster? Propp offered his idea that, '*The connectives most often consist of episodes explaining how character A learns what character B has just done, which he or she must know in order to take action*' (1984, p. 173). I arranged Goo, Moon-cat, the Light Goblins and Mr. Wolf as guides, no matter whether these characters are positive or negative toward Shadow Monster, to provide Little Mouse with different perspectives to review his question and form his questions into his own belief. Finding an answer should be through constant debate, and the conclusions which appear after these meetings provide inspiration from different aspects. By doing so, I can push the plot step by step into its climax.

3.2.3 Storyboard- Visualize the Narrative

The storyboard is the pre-stage of creating a picture book, similar to the storyboard of a cartoon or movie (McCloud, 2001, p. 108). As Scott McCloud, a scholar of the theory of comics, argued that comics are a form of art language and expression: the image in each frame is like

a snapshot, but at the same time, one must consider the position and content of the text. A storyboard includes three main parts: scene, character and action. At this stage, the creator is like a director organizing the set up. Making the storyboard like making a movie, one can change the perspective of the lens, the point of view, light, colour (Dallacqua, 2012, pp. 65–67). It expresses the aesthetic of the creator. The changing viewpoint, such as panoramic views, close-up views, long shots, middle-distance shots and multiple scenes, plays an important part in the process of the design of picture books (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001, p. 62). The angle and design of the view point invite the reader to enter the plot, by changing these, the creator can alter the rhythm. For example, in *The Arrival*, Shaun Tan zoomed in to narrate detail. But when you turn the next page, a full panoramic view enables the reader to allow understanding of this whole world; this changes the rhythm of the story (Figure 3-22). I put this practice into the design of the storyboard of *Light Festival*; mostly I used short shots to narrate the activities, but after the death of Moon-cats, I pulled the ‘camera’ to long shot to see the whole view (Figure 3-23, 3-24). I found this design of lens change can enhance and orchestrate the emotion in the story.



Figure 3-22
The rhythm of *The Arrival* (2006)

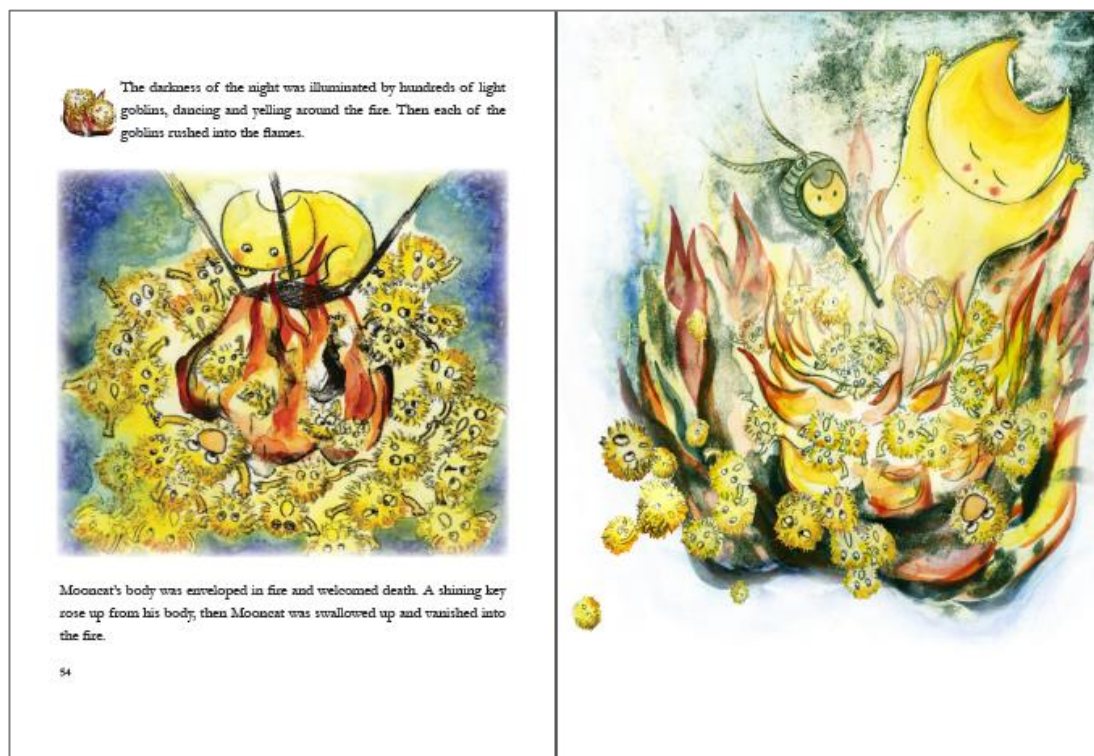


Figure 3-23
Scene of Light Festival, p54-55 in *Little Mouse*
(author's drawing, 2014)



Figure 3-24
Scene of the end of Light Festival, p56-57 in *Little Mouse*
(author's drawing, 2014)

While working on the storyboard, the creator experiences a long period of continuous changes to the story. In the storyboard of *Little Mouse*, I had two versions before drawing: the first version completely images without text, and the second one with text (Figure 3-25). Because this was the first time for me to handle a complex story with picture-book, I chose to separate the text and image. At this stage, the storyboard and description can be said to be two separate independent bodies. Taking these two different forms of creation apart, I can focus on the image, as well as the logic of the text in the story. This method, although complex and labour-intensive, I found very helpful for the first construction of the story of *Little Mouse*. I could focus on each medium and extend them, to combine them more smoothly into the creation. In the past, I seldom considered the detail of the story and its integrity. A lot of the inspiration came when it was freely drawn or written, but often that led to the story becoming very easily out of control or hard to close. This method of separation of image and text is good for a beginner to shape the first prototype of the picture book.

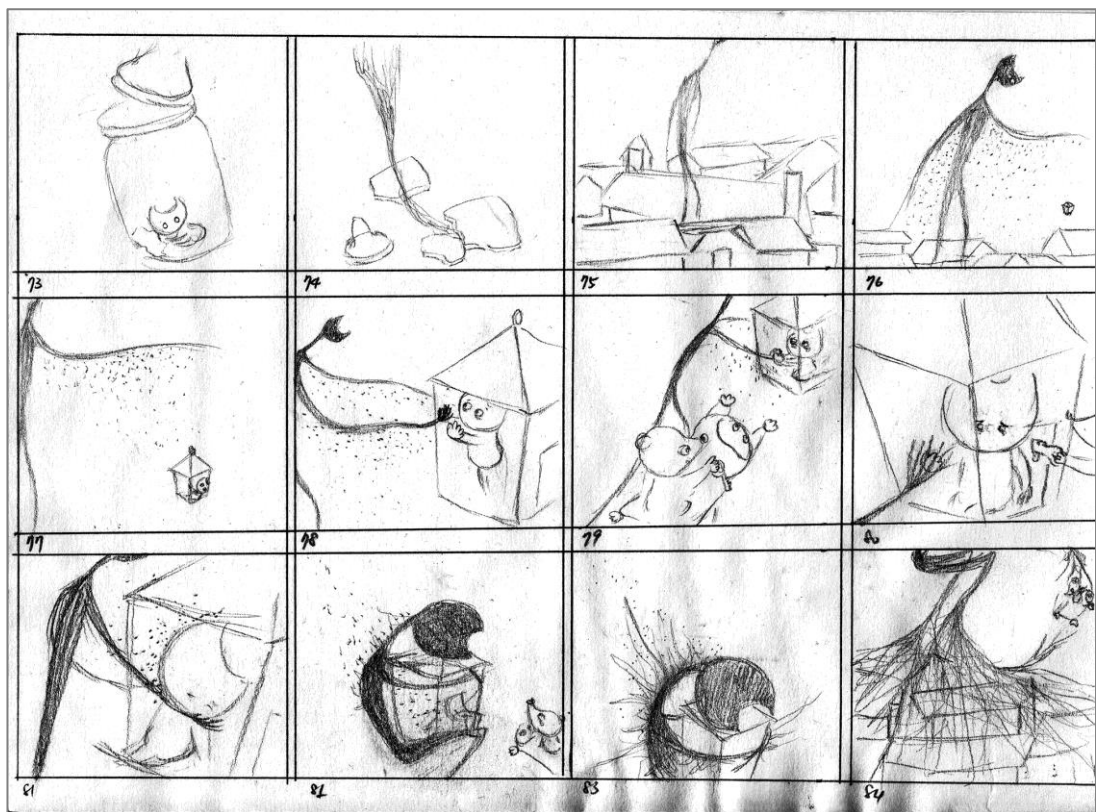


Figure 3-25
The first storyboard, scene 72-84
(author's drawing, 2011)

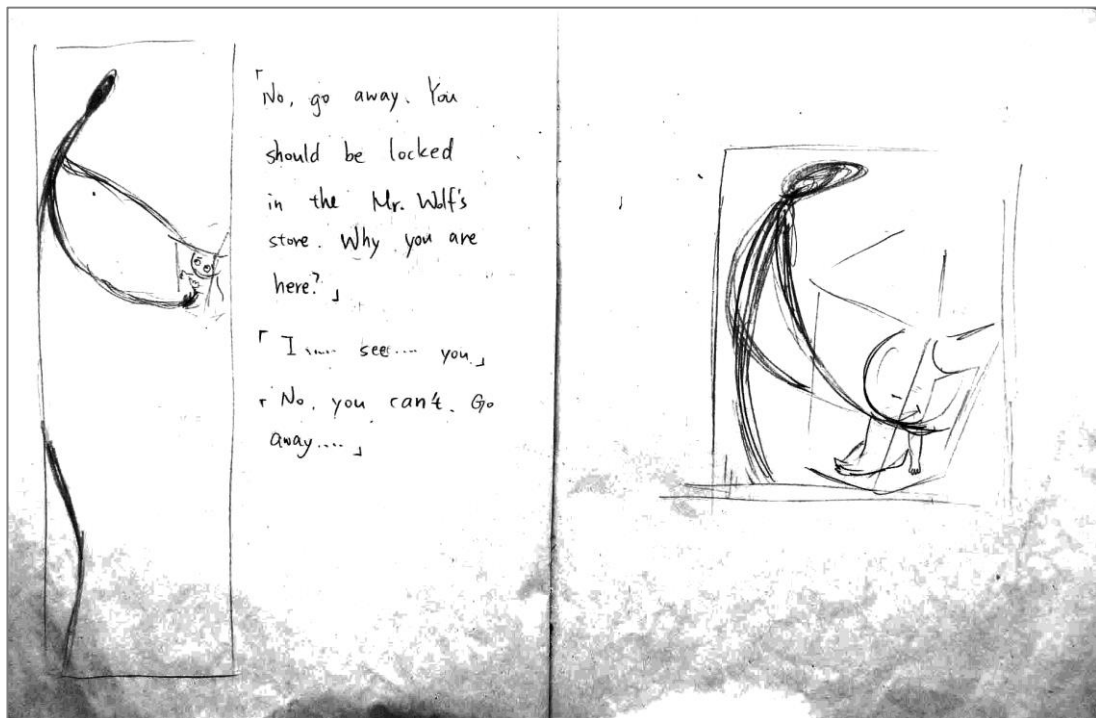


Figure 3-26
The second storyboard, scene of Shadow Monster finding Moon-cat
(author's drawing, 2012)

After completing the first storyboard, I involved myself in experiments with the practice of various visual techniques (see Appendix 2: My process of making stone lithography). Starting to consider the second version of the storyboard (Figure 3-26), I decided to add the dialogue between Little Mouse and his friends to help the reader becoming engaged in the scenario and understanding the topic through the discussion. As Reimer and Furrow suggested '*language provides access to spiritual processes of thought and experience that are potentially co-constructed between the individual and his/her context*' (2001, p. 10). In this process, I focussed on the design of combined text and image. Getting the proportion between text and image right changes the rhythm, and takes time. During this stage, I kept asking friends to read and give feedback because the storyboard would be the important foundation for the following practice. Constant modification after consulting with 'fresh eyes' to provide feedback for creator, and also, leaving the work for a while, and then rereading it always helped me to find some part to be improved. This was the most difficult, long and boring process for me, but inviting others to comment was a necessary stage to push the work to become better.

3.3 Drawing - Finding an Ideal Technique of Visual Expression

The Little Prince is illustrated with simple and colourful images and there is a dream-like aura in *The Arrival*: both of these create a sense of the spiritual and gave me a model to develop my visual style in *Little Mouse*. In pursuing the ideal style, I tried Chinese ink first to test the techniques with which I am familiar. One feature of traditional Chinese art is to make an impression rather than a realistic reflection of the actual scene. For example, the composition style of the drawing of Ma Yuan (1160-1125) - a famous Chinese artist in Song Dynasty—often left a large empty space for the imagination, rather than filling out the drawing with details

(Figure 3-27).



Figure 3-27

Walking on a Mountain Path in Spring, by Ma Yuan, 1190-1225

(Ma Yuan 1190-1225, *Walking on a Mountain Path in Spring*, Colour ink on silk, 27.4 x 43.1 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan)

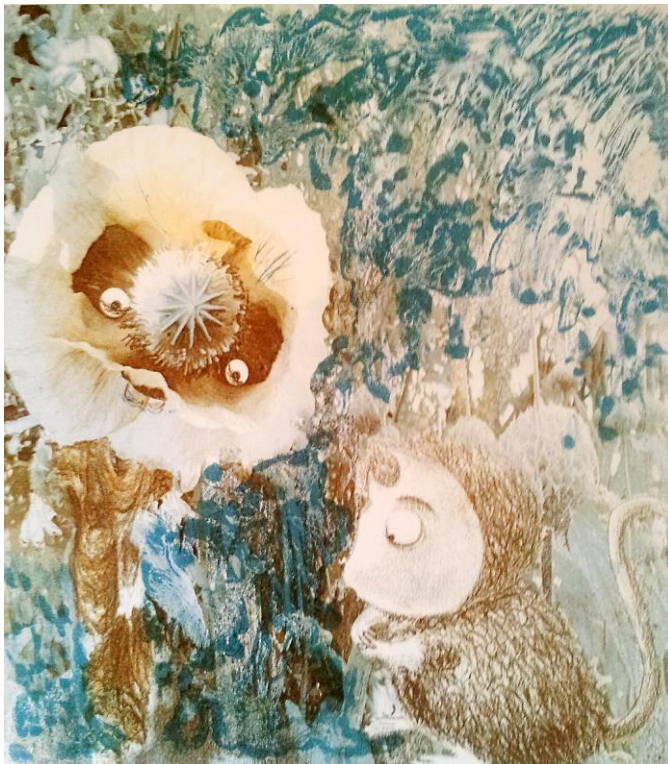


Figure 3-28

Will you be my friend?

(author's drawing, 2012)

At the same time, I explored photo lithography as my second choice because of its refinement and sophistication. I used this technique for some illustrations in *Little Mouse* (Figure 3-28), but I found limitations in use of colour, difficult for me to achieve my ideal spiritual style. Finally, I turned to stone lithography (see appendix: the process of making stone lithography). This technique requires a series of strict printing processes to produce fine lines, and the pattern that it created is hard to recopy exactly. But I was fascinated by the unique texture that this technique could produce: it gives an appearance similar to Chinese ink but with a more delicate texture, perfect for the expression of the inner spiritual quest of my creative project.

3.3.1 Stone Lithography - A Practice to Assist Getting into Contemplation

The process of making a stone lithograph is directly expressive, though printing in general is a ‘relative and indirect’ process (Redon, 1898, pp. 33–35). This combination of practical action offers the artist room to reflect on the mind, and the spirit, and an opportunity to get into ‘contemplation’. As discussed in Chapter Two, the story of *Little Mouse* came originally from my questions about negative emotion and the incomplete self. Surprisingly, the process of making a stone lithograph made me think and reflected on the theories of psychology I had read.

Stone lithography has specific steps to practice: it requires full concentration and constant practice. From the first steps of grinding the stone to printing, this process for me has one main purpose, a mean to pursue fine lines of spiritual feeling. This concentration on practice enabled me to easily get into ‘mindfulness’. Redon describes the fascination of stone lithography: it ‘follows the enchanting and unexpected paths of the imagination, our sovereign lady, she who

reveals to us magnificent seductions that take us by surprise- and conquer us'(Redon, 1898, pp. 33–35). Dario Gamboni, a contemporary scholar of art history, argued that the process of making a stone lithograph involves '*reflecting on [one's] cognitive abilities and [one's] psychological state*' (2007, p. 783); and this concept may extend to art activities (Pike, 2002, p. 13), as in a ceremony which requires regular practice to approach mindfulness. The quest for a spiritual peace, balance, and cultivation of the heart and nature can be found expressed in my culture through practice, drawing with Chinese ink, carrying out the tea ceremony, and calligraphy. Michiyo Ando and Sayako Ito proposed an experience of mindfulness practice by doing yoga first, and accompanying this with art activities. The result shows that the participants 'learned to concentrate their attention on their mind and body, to mediate their feelings or thoughts cognitively' (Ando and Ito, 2014, p. 1227). For me, making stone lithography has a strict order, and requires patience to complete each step of the process. Therefore, this technique became like a practice for my spirit; through this action, I could calm my mind, stay sharp and open the dialogue with myself.

3.3.2 Putting Colours into Stone Lithography

The simple monochrome of stone lithography thus came to express my ideal of the spiritual world. However, I had also to consider how visually to distinguish the psychological world where Inner Monster lives in Light City. By testing acrylics and coloured pencils, I found a balance between the technique of watercolour and lithography (See Figure 3-21). Because the water cannot cover the black oil pigment, it can preserve the textures I like. Also, colour design should be taken into consideration because it affects human cognition and emotions (Elliot and Maier, 2014, p. 108). I found that designing the main colours of the scenes in *Little Mouse* helped me to create specific atmospheres apposite for the story:

- 1) Real world: Dark and pale
- 2) Light City: Colourful
- 3) Light City (Underground): Black, blue, yellow
- 4) Soul: Black, white

The colours changed as a signal to the reader that the story was moving into another section; also, I used colour to imply the aura I would like for the story. For example, to increase the feeling of the mysterious, when the story goes underground in Light City, colour fades in intensity. After Little Mouse enters the shadow monster's inner world, I used purely black and white to build my visual idea for the world of the soul. The combination of the stone lithography and water colour make an ideal medium to marry the style of Chinese ink painting with Western technical expression.

3.4 Design a Picture book- Combining Picture and Text

The relationship between image and text design has been discussed from different perspectives in research into picture books. For example, Lawrence R. Sipe argued that the 'congruency' and 'deviation' between the text and illustration in picture books is based on the semiotic concept of 'trans-mediation' (1998, p. 97). Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott argued that the text in a picture book only provides support for the explanation of the images (2001, p. 82). I think imagery delivers feelings which words cannot; the text also expresses thought processes which the visual pictures cannot. Each medium has its own specialized expression; the picture book becomes more entertaining and diverse by using a 'duet' approach between text and image (Cech, 1983, p. 118). In the organization of a picture book with images and text, both media can react simultaneously or inconsistently with each other to create sparks.

The contemporary composition of a picture book breaks the limitations of the frame, changes the perspective of the viewer, blurs boundaries; the viewer is invited to enter. In the designing of the layout of pages of the picture book, whether to have single-page or cross-page is one of the key considerations, because this affects the rhythm of storytelling (Nikolajeva, 2008, pp. 63–63). For example, in the design of the path of light goblins, I break out of the frame limitation (Figure 3-29), letting Light Goblin flying away as a hint leading into an unknown place.

In the design of *Little Mouse*, I focused first on the large infrastructure section, and then deal with the details later. First, I classified the image and text into each section to which it belongs, then, deal with the visual proportion of text to image. I looked for relevant text and images relationships, and decided which images were more important to the story, and enlarged or shrunk them⁷. Designing the balance between description and the image should take into consideration the strength of each: the image can more easily convey emotion, the environment and scene; the text is good at expressing the inner consideration of the role. For example, in Figure 3-30, I reduced the text describing the environment or scene, but added more details of the protagonist's inner thoughts.

⁷ The graphic design in *Little Mouse* aims to be clear and straightforward for the reader to use. Its composition, therefore, could not be arranged in a very complex way.

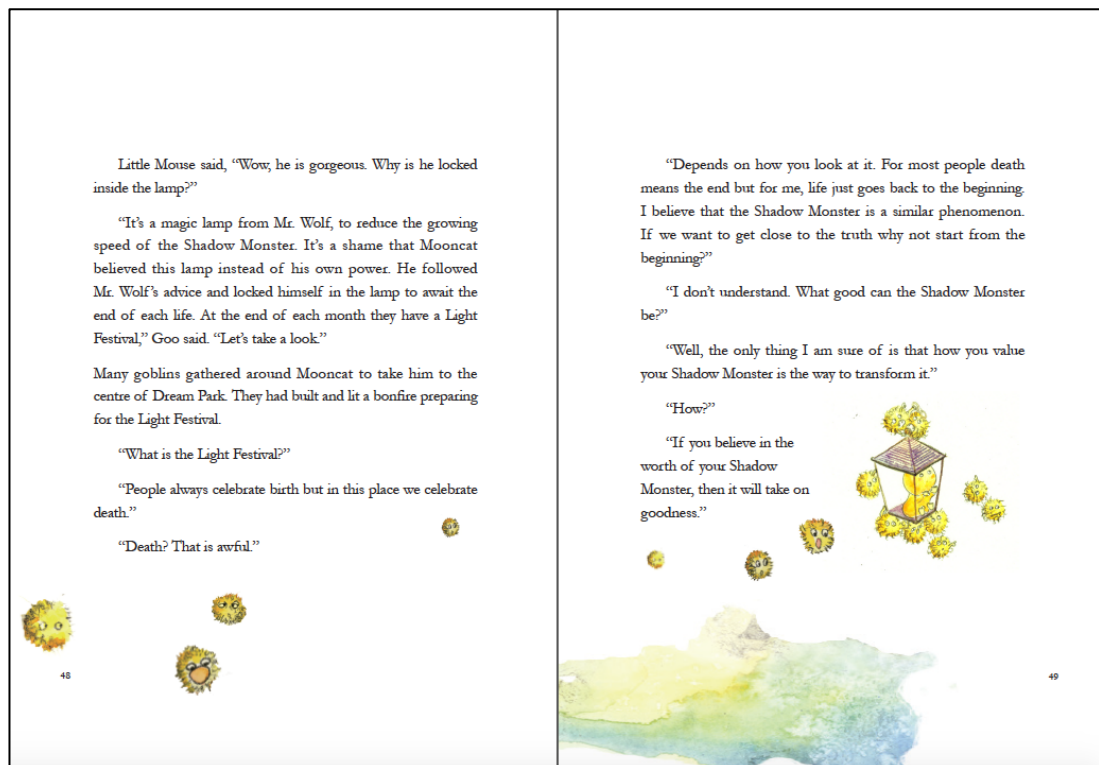


Figure 3-29
Little Mouse, pp.48-49
 (author's work, 2014)

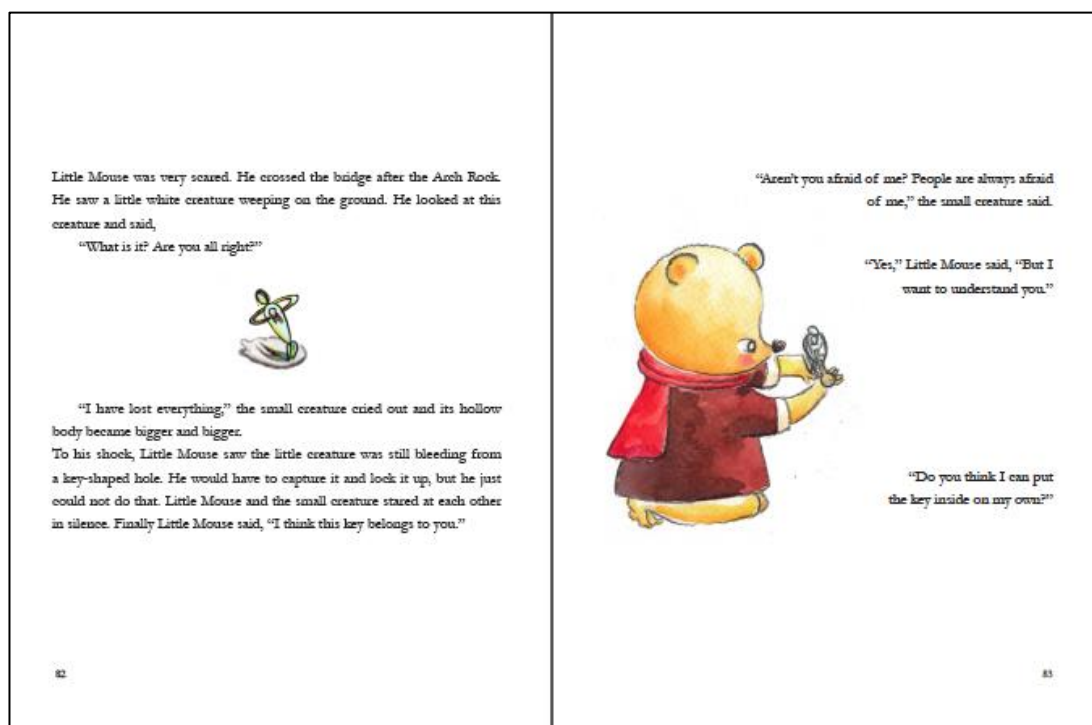


Figure 3-30
Little Mouse, pp.82-83
 (author's work, 2014)

I also considered how to design the connection between each chapter and page. Through the action of turning pages, the details in images allow readers to stop and decode the message within, and the text beside gives the reader more information to understand the depth of perception in the story (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001, pp. 160–161). If the title or plot does not provide enough clues for the reader, it would be difficult to understand the next episode (Nikolajeva, 2008, pp. 59–60). The end of each chapter should leave a feeling of suspense for the reader, and this makes them want to continue reading.

The cover must introduce the story, and arouse the audience's curiosity. In the first version (Figure 3-31), I tried to show a small mouse walking into the fantasy scene. But this version of the colour was not attractive to the audience in the exhibition. (See Chapter Four). So I improved the first version of the cover, using contrasting colours to design the front cover (Figure 3-32). This version of the cover enlarged the small mouse, and he stared at the shadow of Light City. This cover better conveys the theme of the story: the adventures with the shadow. Interestingly, it was found that both versions had their advocates during the exhibition, but the second version of *Little Mouse* certainly attracted more people (See Chapter Four).



Figure 3-31
The first version of cover of *Little Mouse*
(author's work, 2013)

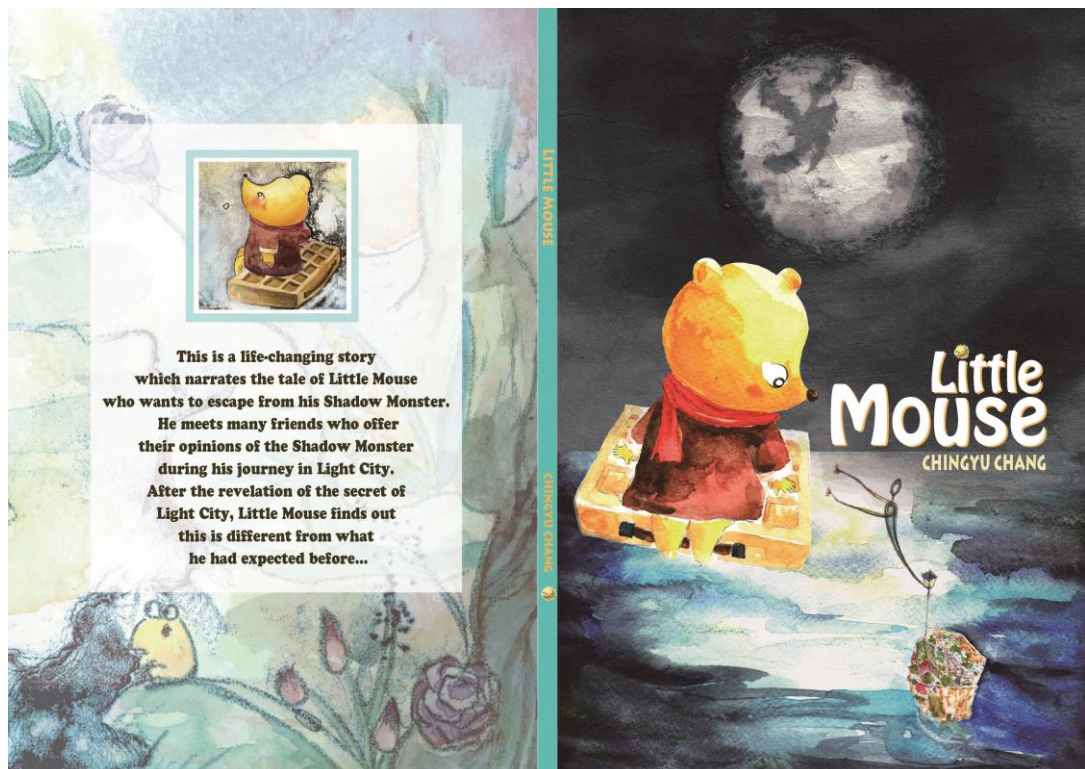


Figure 3-32
The second version of cover of *Little Mouse*
(author's work, 2014)

3.5 Other Media Used to Support the Picture Book: 3D

Models, a Short Animation and an Installation

My original plan for *Little Mouse* did not include these different forms of creation: during the creative process, I wanted to do something related to this project but not in the plan: 3D models, a short animation, and an installation. These unexpected creations stimulated a different perspective on this program.

(A) 3D Models

The 3D model was made in the early stage of *Little Mouse*, after I had painted the draft character of *Little Mouse*. One of my supervisors, Jonathan Gibbs had advised me to make some small models to see how the design worked from different angles. Initially, I only made one prototype of Little Mouse. I discovered that a 3D model did not only help to observe from different angles, but also from the process of making it, I acquired more details about Little Mouse. The process of making 3D model made me think more deeply about who he is, and what happened to him through his costume and gestures. So, I made more main characters, such as Goo, Light Goblin, Mr. Wolf and Moon-cat (Figure 3-33). Through the modelling, I could link each character back to my background setting and used this base to capture its features and expression. These characters look more vivid and real for me because of this. Then, I put these small works aside for a while until the preparation for the exhibition of *Little Mouse*. These 3D models were monochrome clay, but I added colours to them before showing them in the exhibition: this raised a suggestion that I did not expect, a possible merchandise. (see Chapter Four: Exhibition Case 2)



Figure 3-33
The 3D small models of *Little Mouse*
(author's work, 2013)

(B) Short Animation

At the same time, for this exhibition, I activated the second plan with an animation director, Ching Yun Tseng.⁸ We made a short animation from my original drawings, which introduces *Little Mouse*, with the main objective of wanting to arouse the audience's interest to read the book. The idea came from a film trailer, trying to convey the main idea of the story within three minutes. I am also very curious about what *Little Mouse* will be like when it becomes an animation. After discussions with the animation director, she began to create the storyboard for animation. We discussed this storyboard with each other back and forth several times to exchange the ideas. Then, we separated to execute our own parts of the task: I drew several objects for the animation; the director took over the rest of the tasks. Surprisingly, from the

⁸ Animation website: <http://migomeow.wix.com/migo#!little-mouse/c235t>

final animation version of *Little Mouse*, I saw an interpretation of *Little Mouse* which came from the director, Ching Yue: she focused on the interaction between Little Mouse and the Light Goblins, and the consequence when Shadow Monster was released. This short animation let me rethink the main topic that people will take from the picture book of *Little Mouse*. Clearly, the director took inspiration from the shadow and the disaster it causes, and this is the main theme I want to convey in *Little Mouse*. As a result of the animation, I decided to change my front cover of *Little Mouse*, making its expression straighter forward. (Figure 3-33)

(C) Installation

The installation of Mr. Wolf is the last creation of *Little Mouse*. This was also made for the exhibition. While preparing for a solo exhibition, I hoped that the audience could have a different art experience during the exhibition. The secret chamber of Mr. Wolf is one of the scenes I like the most. It comes from the experience of walking through an alley in York. In the evening, to see the indoor scenes of homes through the windows from the street struck me with an idea. Every window is like an unopened gift. Bending down to peek at the interior furnishings was an amazing experience. It reminded me of the joy of my kaleidoscope when I was a child, indulging in a changing myriad world. I wanted to share this experience with the audience, so I created this installation by pulling out the door to see an inner world: the secret chamber of Mr. Wolf and his collections of shadow monsters. (Figure 3-34)

When I created these experiments, I did not think too much in the beginning, I was doing them for fun. But I found the different forms of creation made me think from a different perspective, to know more about this project, and most importantly, it kept me interested in and engaged in this programme to explore more possibilities. It became clearer that *Little Mouse* was no longer just a picture book. It was an art experience.



Figure 3-34
The installation of Mr. Wolf
(author's work, 2014)

3.6 Discussion and Summary

As Elkins suggested, the knowledge of studio work is produced through investing the 'materials of art with an intellectual or conceptual status' (2004, p.30). As a researcher, to understand creation is essential; however, the whole creative process is full of vague and unknown things. This creative process is based on my reflection and it shows a possible approach to the creation of an artistic picture book. Some amendments were required in the process. The storyboard was modified as two stages instead of one, because this is a complex story for me, and is written in second language. So I cannot plan both text and image at the same time. Future creators could skip tone stage, directly engaging in the storyboard with text

and image.

Secondly, I found the basic setting and idea extension research in creating the picture-book to be very helpful. During the creative process, the more details I designed around the basic settings, the easier it became to see the engine of my plot. After getting the basic setting right, my characters automatically pull the story along because their personalities affect their choices and decisions. Another benefit from using VTS is knowing the characters more deeply, and knowing the scenes or plots by asking questions. VTS action is not just about finding the answer, but about increasing detail in the settings and creating more solid ground for creating a picture book artwork.

Creating a picture book involves two kinds of art, it needs two different skills: visual art and narrative. During the creative process: when inspiration for writing dried up, illustrations provide me with inspiration, revealing my subconscious thoughts and imagination. When I lost the inspiration for images, the text could bring more possibilities for images. As Driggs Wolfenbarger and Sipe argued '*in a picture book, words and pictures never tell exactly the same story*' (2007, p. 274).

I take this project as a work of art; before its completion, I did not think too much about the audience. But in the later period of creation, I found that the images and language itself would indeed attract on audience (see Chapter Four discussion). In the next chapter, I explore the creative interactive process between the audience and the artist, and the reflection on this project.

Chapter 4

When *Little Mouse* Meets His Audience

This chapter reflects on my practices by discussing the results of public discussion and feedback about the finished project.

As Wolfgang Iser argued, art ‘*diverges from the ordinary experience of the reader in that it offers up views and opens up perspectives in which the empirically known world of one’s own personal experience appears changed*’ (1971, p. 7). In this chapter, I explore the dynamic between the audience and the exhibitions of *Little Mouse*, in Scotland and Taiwan taking up again the strategies of action research. The Open University has defined action research as ‘action and reflection that lead to enhance practice’ (Coats, 2005, p. 8). Kemmis and McTaggart indicate further that action research is

not simply problem solving. Action research involves problem-posing, not just problem-solving. It does not start from a view of ‘problems’ as pathologies. It is motivated by a quest to improve and understand the world by changing it and learning how to improve it from the effects of the changes made.
(2013, pp. 21–22).

The ‘action researcher’ should practice ‘Reflection-in-action’, collecting data and analysing information to extend and improve practice (Altrichter et al., 2007, p. 153; Gray and Malins, 2004, p. 22). Action research in the study of education, for example, is widely discussed and used in classroom management and curriculum planning. The method expands into improving workshops, exhibitions and so on. Fredericks, Butler and et al. used action research in to local exhibition in Rockhampton, cultural etiquette to provide an environment for young people to develop a collective art exhibition and development story (2014, pp. 14–34). I adopt this idea and applied it to the exhibitions of *Little Mouse*; so the artist became the researcher to observe, reflect and improve the potential deficiencies of this project.

To collect the feedback for *Little Mouse* from the readership, I designed a semi-structured questionnaire by stratified random sampling: selecting 10 respondents from each of my two countries, UK and Taiwan. Semi-structured questionnaire contains both open and closed questions. This questionnaire is beneficial for ‘exploring respondents’ opinions, clarifying interesting and relevant issues’ (Louise Barriball and While, 1994, p. 334); Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling by dividing the population into groups, then randomly selecting the response from a subgroup (Black, 2011, p. 228). In each location, I found ten readers aged between 20 and 39 years old. This questionnaire provides me with material for deeper reflection about *Little Mouse*.

To increase the validity of the research, I used ‘triangulation’ to reduce the ‘design bias’ (Kennedy, n.d.), a main technique to ensure analytical rigour (McNiff, 2001, p. 32). Its methodologies involve systematic collection of objective data, and rigorous analysis to arrive at agreed interpretations of the data. Patrick Kennedy, a design researcher defined triangulation ‘the act of combining several research methods to study one thing’ (Kennedy, n.d.). In this

chapter, my ‘triangulation’ includes action research exhibition, the one semi-structured questionnaire, and the viewers of other art professionals as observer.

The process in this chapter concerns the dynamic between artist, picture book and the readers, an inspirational art activity. This was my initial intention in creating *Little Mouse* as an art form: that it could arouse associations of ideas in the reader. For example, what is Light City? What does the Shadow Monster represent? What is the meaning of this journey? What does Little Mouse really represent? As critics Carol Driggs Wolfenbarger and Lawrence Sipe comment, ‘*The best picture book authors and illustrators illuminate places within the reader’s experiences and cast light in those shadowy corners that lurk alongside the pathways to new understanding*’ (2007, p. 279). I regard *Little Mouse* as an art creation which could inspire discussion, feelings, ideas; this picture book artwork was designed to stimulate such a conversation. As Aristotle said, ‘*art is a place to which to bring a conversation*’; I am aware that understanding of the meanings of the art work is strongly correlated with the audience’s culture and personal experience. There is no certain answer. Still, the feedback research offered a possible illumination of the bridge between creator and their audience.

I begin with the four exhibitions of *Little Mouse*: three exhibitions in Edinburgh at Tent Gallery (2011), City Chambers (2013), and ECA (2014) which included sketches, a collaborate exhibition with two other artists from Taiwan, Chun-Chao Chiu and Yosifu, and a solo exhibition; this activity in Edinburgh was followed by a solo exhibition in Taiwan. So the exhibition evolved along with the development of the picture book, *Little Mouse*, starting in 2011, and held each year until 2015. In mounting these exhibitions, I wanted to acquire feedback from the audience as I finalised my picture book project.

4.1 Exhibition with *Little Mouse*

4.1.1 Planning Activities

I took the diagram by Carr & Kemmis (1986, p. 45)(Figure 4-1), as a guideline and used a similar structure for my exhibitions, I divided my main evolutionary cycle of action research into three main steps: plan exhibition, document exhibition and audience interaction, formulate reflection and feed it back in the next exhibition. For the artist, each exhibition can '*offering a dialectical critique which subjects all 'given' phenomena to critique, recognizing their inherent tendency to change.*' (McNiff, 2001, p. 107) Each exhibition of *Little Mouse* was similar, but I adjusted the show and exhibits slightly according to time, the audience, and different venues.

I use the code 'M' to represent Me, 'C' mean Creator, 'A' refers to the audience. Then I discuss my observations.

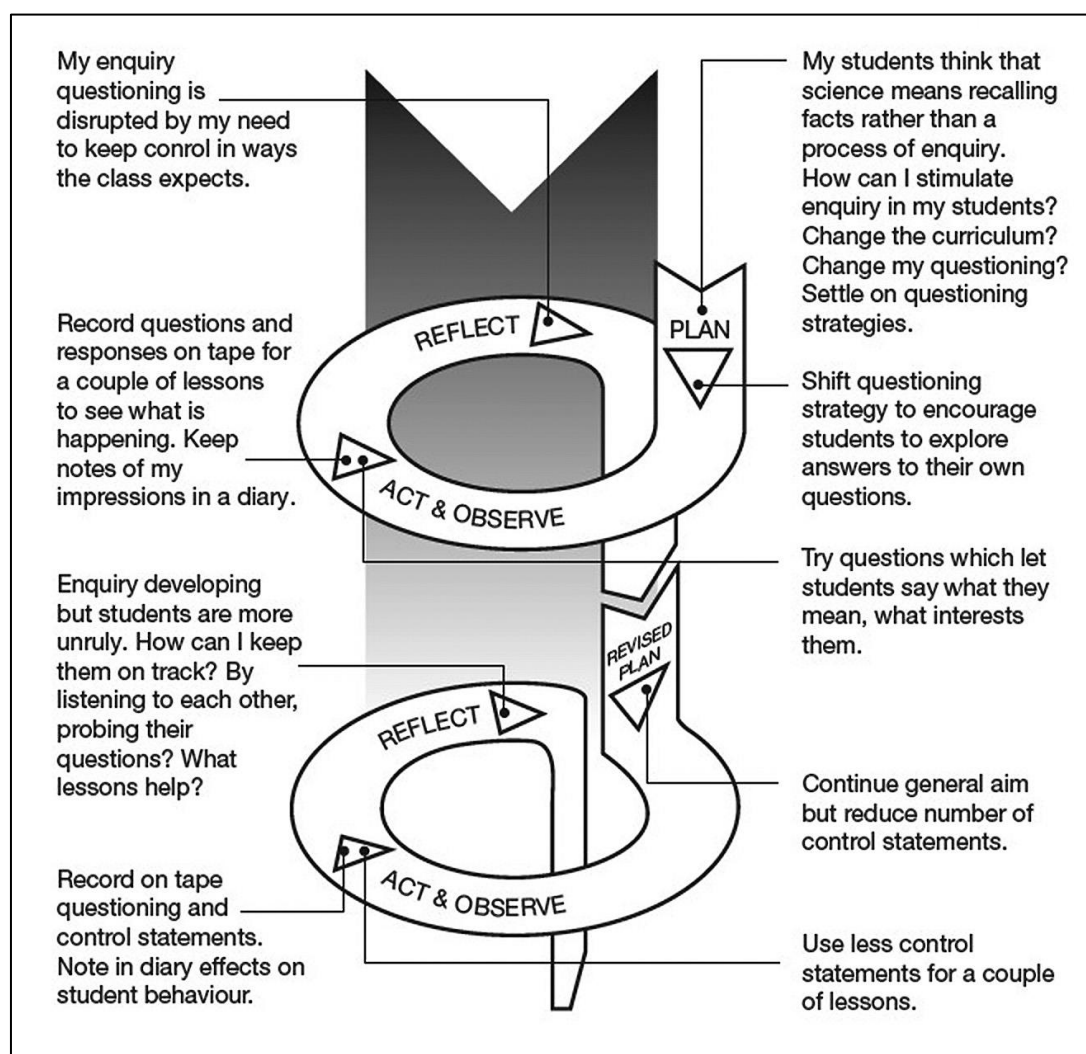


Figure 4-1
The individual aspect in action research
(Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988)

Table 4-1
Action research with exhibitions
(author's plan)

Participants:	the exhibition visitors
Design Process:	Plan, exhibitions, exchange of ideas between the artist and audience, artist reflects on and implements improvements, plans for next exhibition
Observation methods:	Artist observation, feedback book

4.1.2 Exhibition Case 1: November 2011

Time: 24 November, 2011
Exhibition Title: 'The prototype ideas of *Little Mouse*'
Location: Tent Gallery, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland
Exhibition Works: 6 sketch works, 3 photolithography; two picture books (*Little Red and I* and *Auntie Tiger*); the portfolio; *Little Mouse* sketch plan



Figure 4-2
Exhibition 'The prototype ideas of *Little Mouse*', 2011
(author's photos, 2011)

The Tent Gallery is located on the first floor of Evolution House in ECA, entered through the main door of Evolution House. The audience for the Tent Gallery is usually comprised of the students and staff in ECA, because of its location. The turn over at this exhibition was about two or three people per hour.

As shown in Figure 4-2, the main works I showed at this time were drafts, to share the idea of *Little Mouse* with the audience. But the exhibition's time was short, and few audience members entered. Mainly, they just looked at the works, and left without saying a word. One person asked me a question:

A, 'What is the subject of this exhibition?'

But, I did get some feedback from the comments book. A visitor, Susan, wrote '*I just like your watercolour. It's beautiful.*' Another wrote, '*We enjoyed Little Red and I and felt very sorry for the poor beastie*' (Figure 4-3).

So some people liked my watercolour technique and the story of *Little Red and I*, but also revealed the weakness of the exhibition in terms of market research. Few were attracted, very few left comment; most of them simply saw the works and left. There many possible reasons for this, but I started to think about how to ensure the audience first, and engage them in interaction. Next, I found that picture books are difficult to present in an exhibition space. How to make the picture-book more eye-catching was the task for me in the next exhibition.

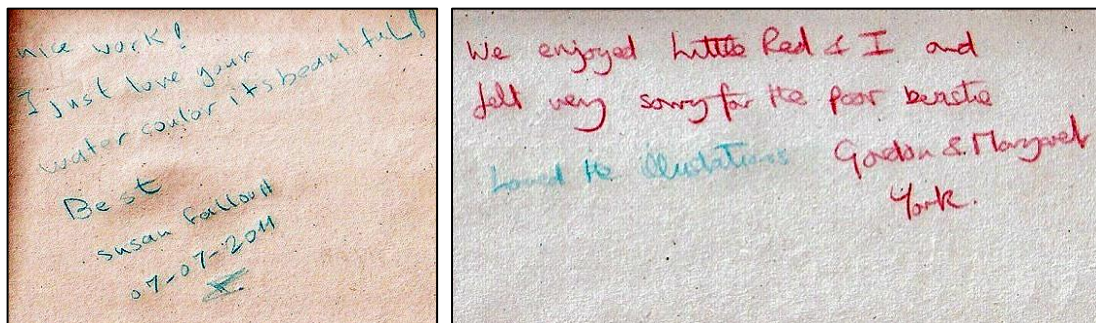


Figure 4-3
Comment Book for Exhibition '*The prototype ideas of Little Mouse*', 2011

4.1.3 Exhibition Case 2: October 2013

Time: 03 October, 2013
Exhibition Title: 'Transformation: Artists from Taiwan in Scotland' (2013 Taiwan National Day Celebration)
Location: Edinburgh City Chamber, Scotland
Exhibition Works: 4 pieces of original illustration works; 4 small postcards; a picture- book (first edition); short animation; four small 3D models



Figure 4-4
Exhibition '*Transformation: Artists from Taiwan in Scotland*', 2013
(author's photos, 2013)

Edinburgh City Chamber is located in the City of Edinburgh Council building, in the heart of the old town. I was part of an exhibition of three artists from Taiwan living in Scotland, to celebrate Taiwan National Day held by the Taipei Representative Office in Edinburgh. The opening event this exhibition lasted for three hours; there were about three hundred guests including politicians, professionals and business people. As a curator and also one of the artists, I focussed on 'transformation' as the theme, since all three artist found that cross-cultural influences were changing their art styles. The exhibition shows the hybrid works resulting from this experience – transformation - the main topic in this collaborate exhibition. (Figure 4-5)

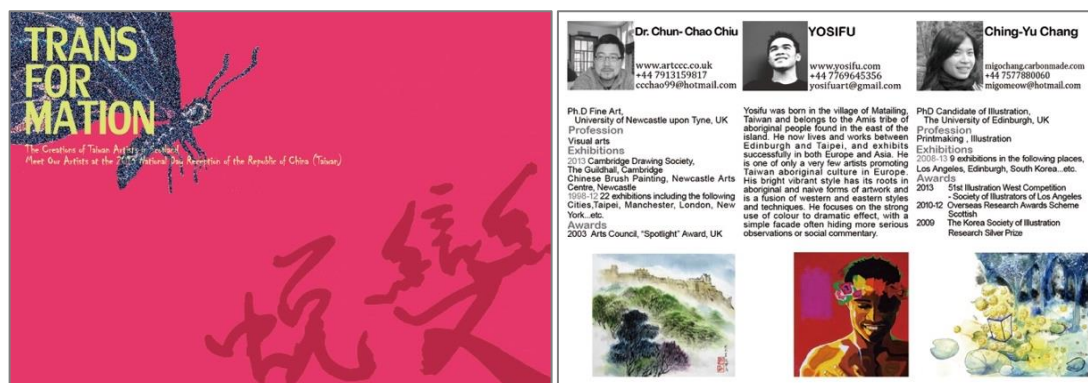


Figure 4-5
The invitation card of Exhibition 'Transformation: Artists from Taiwan in Scotland', 2013
(author's work, 2013)

At that stage, the practical work of *Little Mouse* was about 70 percent completed. I knew I want to get the audience's attention. So I began to design other relevant creations unpacking and extending the work to increase the diversity and richness of the exhibition. For example, I took up my exploratory small 3D models, remodelled them, and added colour. I considered that adding an animation would add fun and attract attention- it would also be easier to see for a larger crowd in a larger space. I invited the animation director Ching-yung to collaborate, making a short animation lasting about three minutes. I thought of it as a kind of trailer for the picturebook artwork, which was not fully complete. And I designed four small postcard cards for the audience to take home after the exhibition (Figure 4-4).

Visitors were enthusiastic and gave a lot of feedback. Here are some examples of the conversations between the audience and myself.

A. 'This topic is very interesting, why did you want to create this topic?'

M. 'In the beginning, I am interested in human's emotions and the shadow within human beings, as discussed in the theory of C.G. Jung, and so I started the project of Little Mouse.'

A. 'How fascinating. But how do you put this idea into creation.'

M. 'Well. I try to use a fictional story as a vessel to express my ideas, especially, I transfer these theories into my story as the fundamental piece of the structure.'

Through my characters, they can convey a discussion of a life-changing journey.'

Other comments include:

A. 'You seem to discuss the creation of some of the serious issues of life, is this related to your own personal experience?'

A. 'The scene in Little Mouse looks very exotic. Could you share more about your creation process?'

A. 'Your illustrations are full of black organic lines, which make me think of Chinese ink painting.'

A. 'I really like these random lines. It's full of imagination.'

A. 'I think the image made with these lines seems to drag me into the world of the imagination.'

Many questions from the viewers concerned the story, the theme, and my research. After playing the animation, the audience did gather in front of my work more than before. Also, the audience read the books and watched the paintings much more than at the first exhibition. The small 3D models raised comment, and people asked about the possibility of them becoming a commercial product. This suggestion is probably due to the common global, example of merchandise spin-off, pioneered by Disney. As I discussed in chapter two, globalization shrinks the gap between cultures; the stronger culture dominates the cultural perspective, and people's minds consciously and unconsciously. As an artist, this common ground should be considered both positively and negatively, and carefully processed within the creative process.

As well as reminding people of marketing, I found the small 3D models helped to make the story seem more real (Figure 4-6). During the exhibition, visitors showed curiosity about build up the fictitious world. They asked me, as a Taiwanese living in Scotland, what I had experienced and how it affected the creative process. Many interested in the world of *Little Mouse*, as much as in the book itself. They offered their observations on scenes in the pictures:

possibly because they recognised elements of the environment they lived in Scotland mixed with other elements. The texture of stone lithography was positively responded to by the audience. Some of the audience confirm my expression in the work. Of course some did not receive these messages, or they did not understand. But the majority of the visitors clearly noticed and were interested in the hybrid style in *Little Mouse*. They felt or sensed elements of their own culture, but at the same time, they could accept and understand the hybrid cultural elements. Second, some at least perceived emotion from the visual expression, although probably not very precisely. The special textured lines of stone lithography indeed attract some viewers.

I found that even with the short animation and the 3D small models, the number of the audience who read and carefully looked at the book itself was still small. I considered changing the cover of the picture book. Partly because there were a lot of business people there, quite a few asked me about the possibility of commercial work for *Little Mouse*. At this stage, I had not thought about the project as commercial, but I would consider this for future exhibitions.



Figure 4-6
The audience of Exhibition '*Transformation: The Artists from Taiwan in Scotland*', 2013
(author's photos, 2013)

4.1.4 Exhibition Case 3: June 2014

Time: 17 June, 2014
Exhibition Title: PhD Exhibition, *Little Mouse*
Location: Evolution House, Edinburgh College of Art
Exhibition Works: The lithographs of *Little Mouse*, four postcards, Installation of Mr. Wolf's secret chamber, portfolio of drafts of *Little Mouse*, Picture Book of *Little Mouse* (Second Edition), small 3D models, short animation, portfolio of the original art works

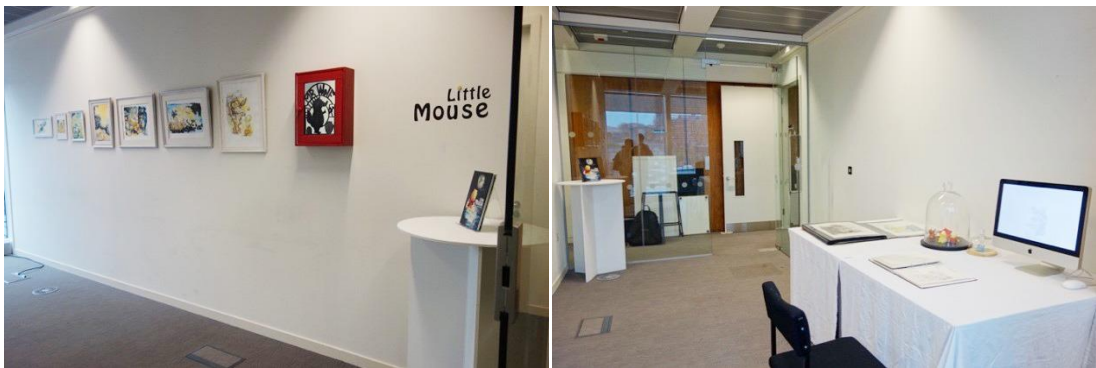


Figure 4-7
Exhibition 'PhD Exhibition of *Little Mouse*', 2014
(author's photos, 2014)

The PhD Exhibition of *Little Mouse* was the final UK exhibition of *Little Mouse*. It was set up on the fourth floor in Evolution House, ECA. Most visitor were staff and students: about four per hour. New this was a piece of installation art which encouraged the audience to open the door: Secret Chamber of Mr. Wolf. I revised the possible book covers of *Little Mouse*. Compared to the last exhibition, the audience are interesting in how to create *Little Mouse* and how to structure his world. Sketches and artworks were in a portfolio. Art staff and students were more inclined to discuss technique and the creative process, and exchange creative ideas. Some were curious about how to create a fantasy story, and interested in its interpretation.

For example, I had this conversation about the character with an undergraduate student in Illustration creator. (I used 'C' as an abbreviation of creator)

C. 'I love your characters, especially Goo. I love his fuzzy hair. It makes me feel comfortable. Also, I like your scene. Where did you get these ideas?'

Other questions from fellow students focused on practice:

C. 'How did you come up of the idea of Little Mouse?'

C. 'How did you create the story?'

C. 'I want to know how to create a picture book, could you give me some suggestions?'

C. 'Which part do you feel the most difficult of this project?'

Where the Taiwan National Day exhibition visitors were business people, and through of the sculptures in particular as commercial products, ECA staff and students are artists, and they cared about the practical process. For example, one of the audience want to know how to make 3D small models their use in the project during its creation (See chapter 3). The short animation was successful as before; the installation work also attracted many people. Other artists gave suggestions for book design and binding, such as the mistake of the cross-page, because some it is difficult to look at the whole image in some pages of *Little Mouse*. Also, people recommended selecting different printing paper to reduce the glare.

From discussion with different experts, I found there were still notable differences in viewpoint. For example, I talked with a publishing manager, who questioned my choice of the technique of printmaking. She thought there was no need to spend so much time pursuing a texture. I quote the conversation:

P. 'May I ask you what are the techniques you choose?'

M. 'Stone lithograph. Its special texture is fascinating for me, but it also takes time to create it.'

P. 'It is not necessary to spend so much time for a special texture. Good work is not necessarily time-consuming...it doesn't fit with commercial efficiency.'

We can see that between art and business there exists a large gap. I regard *Little Mouse* as a picture book artwork, not a commercial creation and as I have explained, the fine lines of stone lithography did express the feeling I want. However, it is still good to listen to a different voice.

4.1.5 Exhibition Case 4: June 2015

Time: 24 June, 2015
Exhibition Title: Picture-Book *Little Mouse* Exhibition
Location: Sugar Bistro 224 Creative Living Park, Pingtung City, Taiwan
Exhibition Works: 12 original lithographs of *Little Mouse*, 4 postcards, installation of the Secret Chamber of Mr. Wolf, 2 Picture Book of *Little Mouse* (Second Edition), 6 small 3D models, short animation, and wall paintings.



Figure 4-8
'Picture-Book *Little Mouse* Exhibition', 2015
(author's photos, 2015)

For the next exhibition, I wanted to know how the Taiwanese can understand the art ideas of *Little Mouse*. The gallery of Sugar Bistro 224 is an historical building of General house, located in the south of Taiwan, in Pingtung. Most visitors to the gallery are parents with children, especially at the weekend. Visitor rate is about five per hour. This place has a diverse audience. My challenge was how to express *Little Mouse* in an easy and approachable way. I decided to add the introduction boards, divided into three concepts, the idea of the exhibition, the technique of stone lithography and the story description. I wanted an environment for a

non-art professional audience to easily engage with the project.

The following is an excerpt from conversations I had with visitors. I still received questions that focused on technique.

A. 'Is this made by printmaking?'

A. 'It is quite an unusual technique? Why did you choose it, is there any special meaning for you?'

A. 'Could you tell me how to make it?'

A. 'What's the value of printmaking in the art market?'

Some did comment on the subjects, story/ characters:

A. 'I like Little Mouse and the world he lives in.'

A. 'I like Light Festival, because of its background and the colours within.'

A. 'I like your Goo, he looks so soft and furry. He makes me think of my rabbit.'

People often used the word 'unusual' to describe the stone lithography, which makes me think that this technique is rare in Taiwan. Visitors were curious about how to make an image from stone lithography, and wondered about its scarcity and value in the art market.

Most Taiwanese visitors understood and liked the story of *Little Mouse*. Like the audience in Scotland, they are curious about the relationship between *Little Mouse* and me: the experience of living in a foreign country and the process of how to create a picture book. Unlike most of my UK audience (except the City Council visitors), Taiwanese visitor paid attention to the practical business side. They offered many commercial proposals, to do with the production of merchandise: suggesting I could make bookmarks, postcards, dolls and other popular creative merchandise.

I also had for the first-time copies of the book for sale, in English and Chinese. Surprisingly, I

assumed that most of the audience would prefer the Chinese rather than the English version of the picture book. But the audience chose the English version, probably because it represents an exotic commercial product and a tool to learn English. One member of the audience who is also a mother, suggested that *Little Mouse* could be published as an audiobook version in English, so that she could share it with her children. Taiwanese people look at the practical commercial value, and also the practical aspect of content of the picture book itself, such as education in a second language.

4.1.6 The Workshop: June 2015

I held a workshop on the opening day of *Picture-Book Little Mouse Exhibition* in June 2015, after the opening event of exhibition (Figure 4-9). I demonstrated how to use salt with water-colour to create a special texture, but not restrict any content of the drawing (Figure 4-10). There were four adults and three children participating in this workshop. The whole process took three hours.

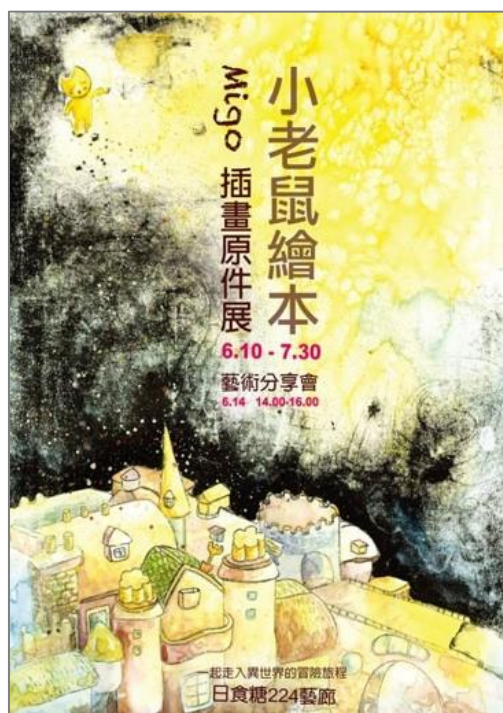


Figure 4-9
Poster of '*Picture-Book Little Mouse Exhibition*',
2015
(author's work, 2015)

Participants all said they like the colour and expression in *Little Mouse*. However, when it comes to their own turn, they lacked confidence to use water-colour with salt. They were afraid of losing control. But in the end, everyone created personal and unique images. Most participants tended to create a mental image instead of capturing the precise shape. An anonymous participant agreed to share her drawing experience with me (Figure 4-11). Her water-colour with salt made her pictures full of fantasy, and she added a mysterious character who did not look human. She indicated that it is a dangerous character. In the right of the image, she drew a small ant hiding in the bushes, and she said it represented her. She feels that the ant is afraid of the dangerous character.



Figure 4-10
Workshop of 'Picture-Book *Little Mouse Exhibition*', 2015
(author's photos, 2015)



Figure 4-11
Work of Participant A
(anonymous, 2015)



Figure 4-12
Work of Participant B
(anonymous, 2015)

This was a very interesting experience. The drawings by this participant show that the audience can engage with the idea in exhibition and elaborate it (Figure 4-11 and 4-12). I found that salt with watercolour is a good technique for painters to express personal insight images, as if the technique of losing control slightly helps to express or release the inner world of the painter. Some of these drawings show how someone could respond visually directly after experiencing the exhibition of *Little Mouse*. The painter (Figure 4-11) talked about her small ant trying to pass a dangerous character, even though this monster-like man looks peaceful in appearance. Her work made me think of the relationship of *Little Mouse* and the Shadow Monster; not just her imagery but her explanation of it.

After the exhibition and workshop, the audience's reaction and feedback confirmed my opinion that technique shaped expression. Audiences in Taiwan and the UK have differences in culture, but their understanding of *Little Mouse* was surprisingly similar. The only difference is I found the UK audience concerned itself about the meaning of the work more. The audience in Taiwan was interested more in its potential use in the market. These differences might be based on cultural background- through the UK people in one case were art professionals- the Taiwanese were not trained, but their ability to interpret *Little Mouse* was very similar. At the exhibitions became an opportunity for the artist to interact with the audience, inspiring the artist to think more widely. Action research provides the chance to reflect and validate ideas, and to improve the picture book art by using different forms of exhibition. Action research has been criticized on the grounds of its rigour and validity (Koshy, 2005, pp. 30–31). However, it worked well for me on the project of *Little Mouse*. It narrowed the gap between creator and audience, and helped me check my assumptions (Koshy, 2005, p. 29).

Next, I used a questionnaire to gather more feedback in a different way.

4.2 Feedback from Questionnaire

I conducted a reader survey to test my ideas of the research in *Little Mouse*.

When I started to design *Little Mouse*, I was immediately jumping into the discovery of the story itself. During the process of creating, I was always focusing on the story development as a parable of the issues in my life and a reflection of my concern, to represent a crisis to deal with the shadow within. Therefore, because of the sources I used, visual and literary, I assumed that a group was similar to my age would have enough life experience to understand the meanings behind the story; differently from the commonest target reader of picture books, children. The issue of the reader's age was raised by Le Guin, in her book *The Language of The Night*. She wrote of her interest in the subject 'Coming of age': growing up at a certain age, people are forced to face many different life issues, which are not problems when they are children; for example, how to accept an imperfect self. In Le Guin's view, this issue mainly arises in teenagers becoming adults; she finds her readership mainly located here. Le Guin says that she finished *A Wizard of the Earthsea* at the age of thirty-one: it is a story for adolescents telling about a young man's fight with magical, evil shadow (Le Guin, 1989, pp. 44–45). I adapted Le Guin's concept to enrich my picture book, *Little Mouse*. Anthropomorphic characters and dream-like illustrations accompany the story to express my life task: learning to build up a relationship with the dark side of the self. Surely, the actual range of 'Coming of age' changes with the times, culture and location. My picture book as an artwork reflected my experience, and I could assume that this is a challenge that many people encounter in the period of early and mid-adulthood.

Therefore, I chose 10 subjects aged between 20-39 both in Taiwan and Britain and presented them with the following questionnaire. This questionnaire tries to find out how the idea of

Little Mouse has been understood by different readers, and age groups from both UK and Taiwan.

Having researched methods of constructing questionnaires, I used a semi-structured questionnaire with stratified sampling research as my method. Before asking a subject to take part in the research, I prepared an information form to help understand this project. If the subject was interested and consented, I sent them the E-book of *Little Mouse* and the questionnaire linked by email. The questionnaire was created by eSurv, funded by Edinburgh University and other research institutions, as a tool for researchers and students to conduct online surveys. These questionnaires are anonymous, so I used numbers as the code to process their answers.

I thought long and hard about each question; what did I really want to know? Had I successfully communicated my ideas through *Little Mouse*? What was the audience reaction to my book? I am aware that some questions might seem too leading – might have a little unintentional bias - for certain people; however, for the main purpose of it - communication with the public as an artist-, it was still very valuable for me to hear different voices. The feedback is not only beneficial for me to understand the thoughts of my potential audience, but much more importantly provides evidence for me to reflect on the success of my visual research. Apart from open questions, I give the result of each question in two tables: the first shows the overall result, and the second indicates the difference between British and Taiwanese respondents.

4.2.1 Reflecting on Outcomes

Question 1: Which parts do you like best in the content of *Little Mouse*?

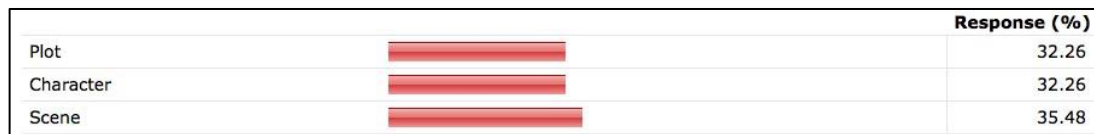


Figure 4-13
Responses to questionnaire Question 1

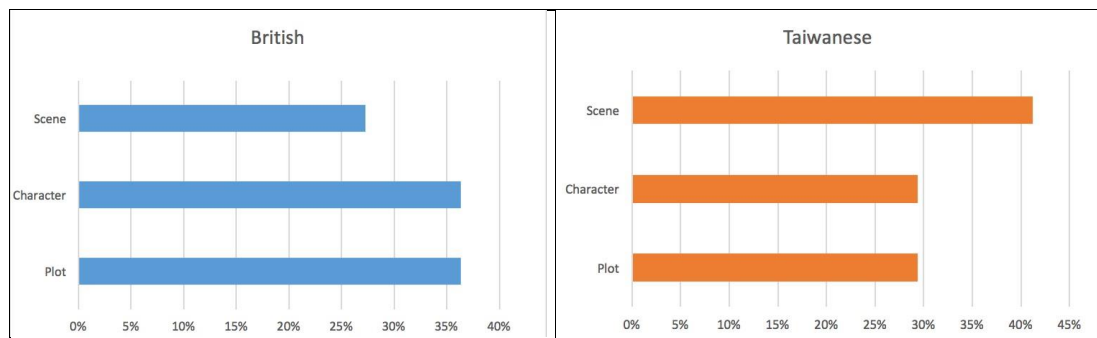


Figure 4-14
Comparison of responses to Question 1 British and Taiwanese

From Figure 4-13, the overall result, 35.48 percentage like the scenery best, then the plot and the character. However, Figure 4-14 tells a slightly different story: the British prefer the character and the plot first, then the scenery; Taiwanese prefer scenery more than the two other. Responses E (British) specifically wrote, ‘*The book is a wonderful hybrid, with elements of early religious fable and science fiction with a cute art style that works as a nice contrast to some of the book’s dark material.*’ The word ‘hybrid’ directly expresses what I had hoped to achieve; this feedback mentions the visual impact of the contrast with the dark, and the integration of science fiction and beliefs. The overall response is close to that which I observed in the exhibition where visitors were interested in the combination of familiar and exotic elements in the scene of *Little Mouse*.

Question 2: Which part do you like best in the forms of *Little Mouse*? (multiple choice)

	Response (%)
Cover	25.00
Illustrations	58.33
Graphic design	16.67

Figure 4-15
Responses to Question 2

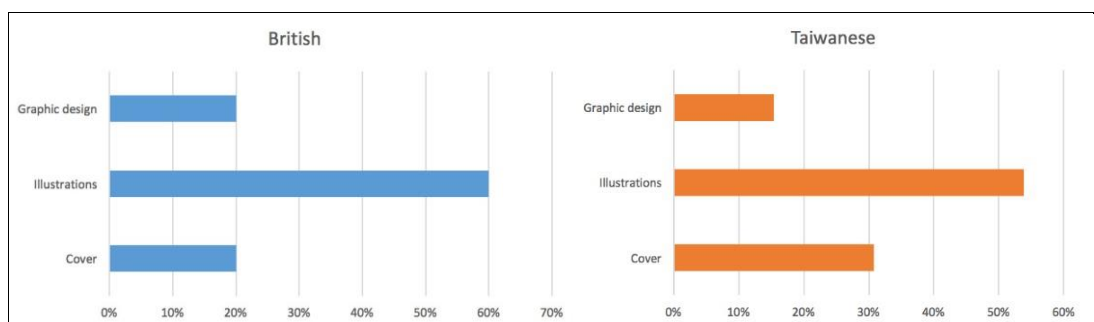


Figure 4-16
Comparison of responses to Question 2, British and Taiwanese

In the book design, imagery is the favourite part for the audience whether British or Taiwanese. Second is the cover, and last is graphic design. Responses E (British) explained ‘*Although the story is dark, the illustrations are still warm and inviting, it is a great way to draw the reader into the world of Little Mouse, especial for younger readers.*’ This reminds me of the final section of the exhibition in Taiwan, where the young audience member told me that she particularly likes my characters and colours. One friend also mentioned that she feels that my art is very warm, full of yellow light. I did not deliberately intend to do so during the creating process. However, this result also points out that the graphic design needs to improve; I always realised this was a weakness.

Question 3: Which character do you like most in *Little Mouse*?

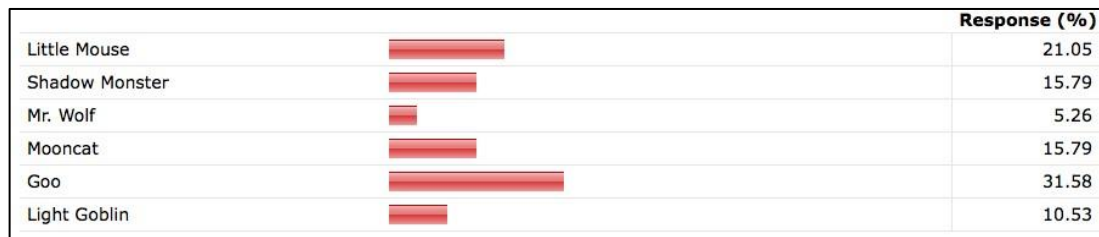


Figure 4-17
Responses to Question 3

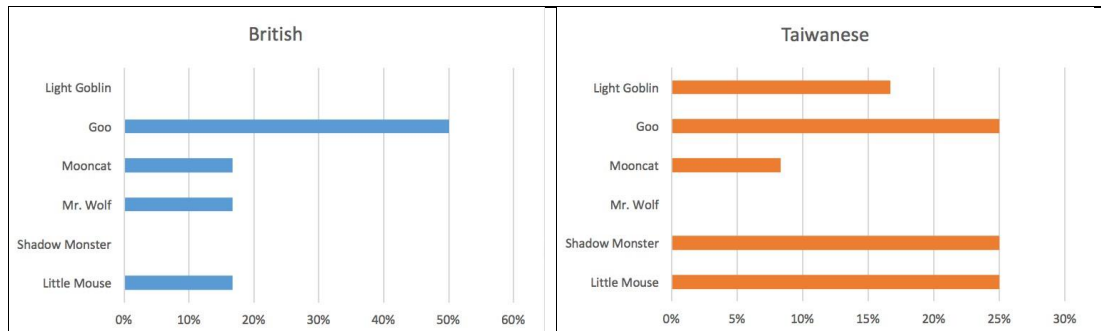


Figure 4-18
Comparison of responses to Question 3 British and Taiwanese

Goo is certainly the best liked character in *Little Mouse*. In the exhibition in Taiwan (Please see the Exhibition 4), a visitor mentioned she likes Goo because of his appearance. Responses E (British) says *‘As soon as I open the character page at the start of the book I loved the look of Goo, his furry and sweet face make for a memorable character design. I like his role in the story too as he is a little mysterious, but still acts as a kind of mentor for Little Mouse.’* Response P (British) says Goo *‘helps little mouse and is a good friend.’* Also, Response T (Taiwanese) thinks *‘Goo is a very nice person willing to help.’* In addition to the appearance of Goo, the role he plays in the story is very lovable. Little Mouse is the second favourite character, responses think Little Mouse is very brave, with the courage to solve the problem. Mr. Wolf is the most disliked character. Response N (British) gives an interesting answer about Mr. Wolf: *‘he is stuck in his ways. His traumatic past led him to believe in the shadow monster.’*

Figure 4-18 shows a difference between British and Taiwanese. Goo still is the most popular character in Little Mouse for both; however, the disliked character is quite different for these two groups of people. The British clearly dislikes Light Goblin and Shadow Monster; on the other hand, the Taiwanese do not like Mr. Wolf at all. I found two responses were particularly interesting, beyond my original expectation. The first one is from a British Response, Response P, who thinks the characters in this story are a bit irrelevant, and therefore he does not like any of them. The thoughts of this reader are revealed from his/her answer of other questions; he/she writes '*The plot is somewhat confused and introduced too many new concepts.*' On the contrary, Response C (Taiwanese) provides a totally different imaginative interpretation: he thinks '*all characters are a development from little mouse, a delusion.*' All the characters he sees as created by the imagination of the main character, Little Mouse. In a sense, he is right; this is a very Jungian response.

I observe that most people decide on whether a character is lovable or not mainly depending on their actions. Although visual appearance may affect it a little, it does not have an entirely decisive impact. The role he/she plays has more influence.

Question 4: Which part of the picture book of *Little Mouse* do you feel is not easily understood? (Open question)

Table 4-2 The feedbacks to questionnaire Question 4 (Open question)

ID	Responses
Response A (Taiwanese)	none
Response B (Taiwanese)	none.
Response C (Taiwanese)	none of it. quite clear, it expresses the author's point of view.
Response E (British)	Some of the background lore for the main story might be a little hard for very young reads to follow, but I think they would understand enough to follow the main story.
Response K (British)	I got a little confused when he was talking about the shadow monsters and the effect they have on the world and how they only live for so long but can kill you and speak to you.
Response L (British)	Where everything came from.
Response M (British)	The plot is somewhat confused and introduced too many new concepts
Response N (British)	At first I was led to believe that the shadow monster was just going to be a think that the little mouse made up but on further reading g it seemed like this was more of an old factual tale within the non-factual tale.
Response P (British)	none
Response Q (Taiwanese)	The reason why Moon-cat has to be locked up and regarding the light festival.
Response T (Taiwanese)	Not hard to understand the whole storyline
Response V (Taiwanese)	all are easily understood
Response W (Taiwanese)	The history of Light City

This is an open question. The responses can choose whether they want to answer it. Half of them decline – my guess is because it is more time consuming – the responses who were willing to answer provided valuable feedback. One Response thought the background of the story is too complicated, especially the origin of shadow Monster. Some responses thought the reason for the monster was to do with Moon-cat living in the lamp, rather than with the history of Light City. But most of the audience thought the main story is easy to understand.

I was particularly interested in the answer of Response N (British): *‘At first I was led to believe that the shadow monster was just going to be a thing that the little mouse made up but on further reading it seemed like this was more of an old factual tale within the non-factual tale.’*

This response realised that the origins of *Little Mouse* came from a variety of stories and theories, and he/she seized the main point of *Little Mouse*, the life changing journey.

Question 5: Which concept or concepts you think that *Little Mouse* is trying to deliver?

(tick all that apply)

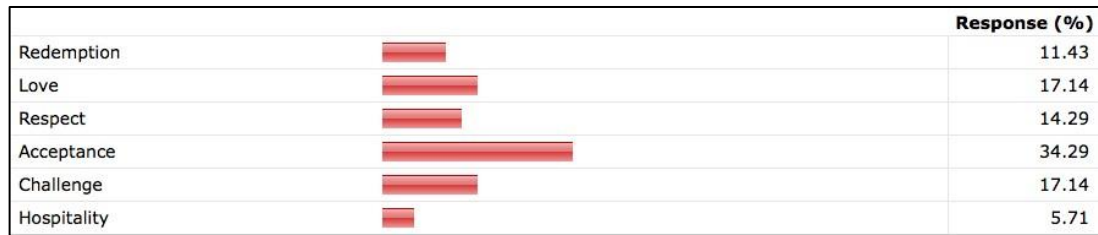


Figure 4-19
The feedbacks to questionnaire Question 5



Figure 4-20
Comparison of Question 5 British and Taiwanese

From the overall result (Figure 4-19), most responses understand the concept of the story I want to convey: ‘acceptance’, followed by ‘love’ and ‘challenge’. However, Figure 4-20 shows that the biggest difference between British and Taiwanese is the idea of ‘*hospitality*’, which is a response that I did not expect anyone to tick.

I am also surprised by the different answers from the additional open question. For example, Response C (Taiwanese) says that he thinks the concept in *Little Mouse* is ‘*turn to nature, and peace.*’ Response E (British) thinks ‘*the book teaches you never to take things at face value and to question what is going on in the world around you.*’ And Response L (British), who feels ‘*depression*’ is the core of my work. This word appeared several times in answers to different questions from responses. In response to this finding, my explanation is that *Little*

Mouse reflects an individual's question toward life; this question also can refer to the anxiety of the contemporary human being. As Ando Satoshi argued, stories can contain – ‘*a reflection of the time's anxiety and pessimism*’ (2008).

Combing the answers, I found that people take various angles and interpretations to see *Little Mouse*: mostly acceptance, love and challenge; but some might also think of frustration and anxiety. The feeling of reader might be relative to his/her own individual experience and the culture background, it also indicates that this story contains different layers and provides various ways for people to interpret, which fits my original hope for this work.

Question 6: What do you think that the Shadow Monster may represent in the real world?

Table 4-3 The feedbacks to questionnaire Question 6 (Open question)

ID	Responses
Response A (Taiwanese)	the wound or damage of life
Response B (Taiwanese)	The dark side of the society, such as seven sins
Response C (Taiwanese)	misunderstand of nature
Response E (British)	The duality in all of us. We all have competing thoughts and feelings, I think the Shadow Monsters are the manifestation of the thoughts and feeling we repress without first trying to understand them.
Response F (Taiwanese)	The dark side of human beings
Response H (Taiwanese)	Negative feelings that stock in the deep soul and never be released.
Response K (British)	Inner demons, your own fears
Response L (British)	Conscience.
Response M (British)	Depression
Response N (British)	overcoming fear. anxiety
Response P (British)	The evil inside everyone
Response Q (Taiwanese)	Everyone's inner evil.
Response T (Taiwanese)	Multiple Personality, Id, Ego and Super Ego
Response V (Taiwanese)	fear
Response W (Taiwanese)	Sad emotion

I really did want to know what Shadow Monster represented to the audience. Most of them think that Shadow Monster is a negative character, through they interpret this into different metaphors. For example, Response Q (Taiwanese) thinks Shadow Monster represents ‘*everyone's inner evil.*’ Response P (British) considers it is ‘*the evil inside everyone.*’ Response

K (British) also says it is '*inner demons, your own fears.*' Response H (Taiwanese) thinks it should be the '*Negative feelings that stock in the deep soul and never be released.*' Response F (Taiwanese) believes it is '*the dark side of human beings.*' Response B (Taiwanese) also links to the idea of '*the dark side of the society, such as seven sins.*' Response A (Taiwanese) describes as '*the wound or damage of life.*'

There were two unexpected answers. Response C (Taiwanese) answers that the Shadow Monster may represent '*misunderstanding of nature*'; this echoes the theory I interpreted from 'Ten Cow Herding'. Response L (British), a British response, answered '*conscience*'. Although it was not my conscious intention, from another perspective, conscience could indeed be recognised in part in the role of Shadow Monster.

Overall, most of the respondents understand the Shadow Monster as a negative representation, an abstract concept turned into a visual form. But it was interestingly that the Shadow Monster gave rise to so many different interpretations. It was like looking at an artwork which could be explained from different angles. All results were correct in my opinion because *Little Mouse* is a picture book artwork, my intention was to make it so it could be discussed in a wide range of topics.

Question 7: Do you feel any issues have been discussed in *Little Mouse*?

Table 4-4 The feedbacks to questionnaire Question 7 (Open question)

ID	Responses
Response A (Taiwanese)	shadow, needs, challenge
Response B (Taiwanese)	Yes, the friendship and relationship.
Response C (Taiwanese)	conscious which effects the reality, but it's all delusion
Response E (British)	the duality of humanity and the importance of accepting yourself as a whole. Being vigilant of the world around you and remembering the importance of questioning the things you are told
Response F (Taiwanese)	Courage and fear
Response H (Taiwanese)	People care about what public think of them and forgot to listen to the inner of themselves.
Response K (British)	Learning how to do things on your own, asking for help, learning to accept death, trust, taking risks
Response L (British)	Accepting what you cannot change.
Response M (British)	Yes, but I do not think the concepts have been properly communicated
Response N (British)	anxiety
Response P (British)	drug use, tolerance
Response Q (Taiwanese)	Using outside force to regulate one's mind possibly doesn't work well.
Response T (Taiwanese)	yes
Response V (Taiwanese)	yes
Response W (Taiwanese)	A life journey

Surprisingly, some of the answers to this question are similar to my thoughts. Response E (British), answers fully with the concept I wanted to convey: he said, '*the duality of humanity and the importance of accepting yourself as a whole. Being vigilant of the world around you and remembering the importance of questioning the things you are told.*' Response W (Taiwanese) says '*A life journey*'. These two responses entirely grasp the core of the work.

There are answers which are relatively close to my idea, although they do not directly fit. Response H (Taiwanese) thinks it is '*People care about what the public thinks of them and forgot to listen to their inner selves.*' Response F (Taiwanese) says '*Courage and fear*' and Response L (British) believes '*Accepting what you cannot change.*' Response K (British) considers it is a discussion of '*Learning how to do things on your own, asking for help, learning to accept death, trust, taking risks.*' Response B (Taiwanese) says '*the friendship and relationship*' and Response A proposes '*shadow, needs, challenge*'.

The other responses offer their views from different angles. Response Q (Taiwanese) considers is *'Using outside force to regulate one's mind possibly does not work well.'* Response C (Taiwanese) thinks it is a discussion of *'consciousness which affects reality, but it's all delusion'*. Unfortunately, Response M (British) think that *'Yes, but I do not think the concepts have been properly communicated.'*

In addition to Response M (British), most of the response, whether Taiwanese or British, all grasped the topic of *Little Mouse*, and some added valid additional interpretations. Their answers responded with some room for my aspiration that reading *Little Mouse* might be like my reading experience of *'The Little Prince'*, the reader to interpret in their own way.

Question 8: Which category of literature do you suggest that *Little Mouse* can be put in?

(tick all that apply)

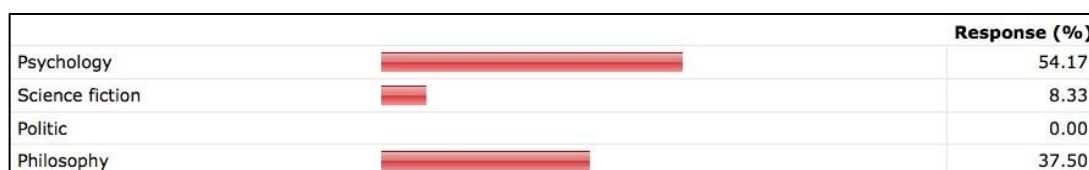


Figure 4-21
Response Question 8

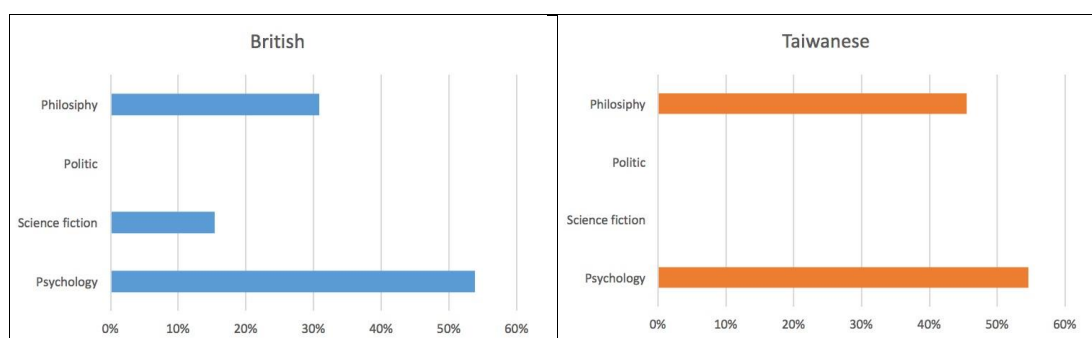


Figure 4-22
Comparison of responses to Question 8 between British and Taiwanese

Most respondents thought that this story explores psychological and philosophical issues (Figure 4-21). In Figure 4-22, a British response mentions science fiction. Response E (British) suggests it can be classed as '*fantasy or even dystopia fantasy*'. So the readers do have a feeling that there is psychological or philosophical speculation in *Little Mouse*.

Question 9: If you would like to share *Little Mouse* with others, which age groups you would consider it must suitable to share with? (tick all that apply)

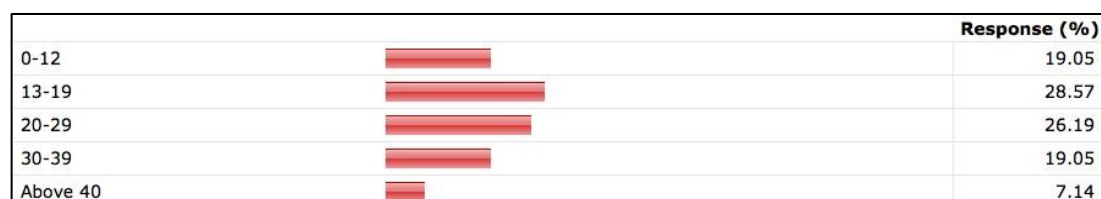


Figure 4-23
Responses Question 9

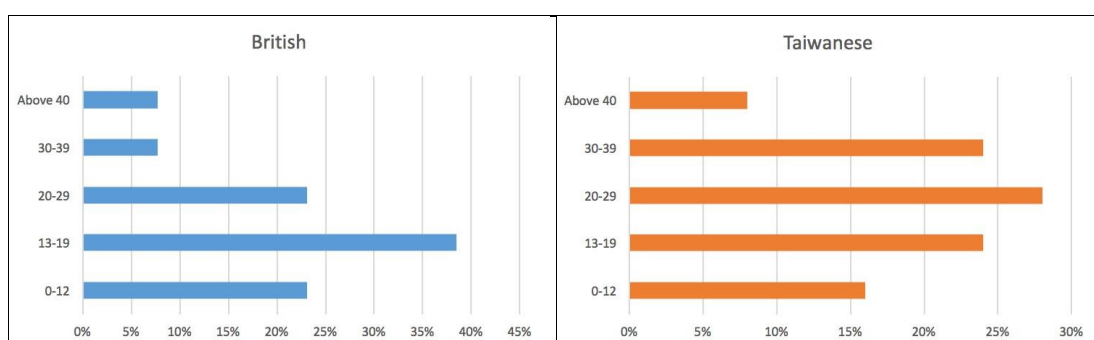


Figure 4-24
Comparison of responses Question 9 between British and Taiwanese

Responses suggest that the most suitable age-range are located between 13-19 and 20-29, followed by 0-12¹ and 30-29, and over 40 in the minority. The responses divide into three main parts. The first part thinks that the story is dark and complex; therefore, suitable for young people, but not for children. For example, Response C (Taiwanese) thinks people ‘*above 20 years old are searching external desire, who cannot face the value of the self*’ so this group should have more motives to read this book. Response K (British) thinks ‘*I found the story quite deep and dark and it would not suit younger ages as it discusses death and is quite*

¹ I am aware that the age between 0-12 actually is a wide range, which covers various stages of readers. When I designed the questionnaire, I had the bias that 0-12 is not my ideal audience, so I only regard them as one group. However, I still give it in the table to show the degree of the difference between my assumption and the feedback of responses.

creepy.’ Response Q (Taiwanese) suggests ‘*This story is probably kind of dark for very young children, but for people older than that, they can surely see something that they can identify with in the story.*’ Response V (Taiwanese) thinks ‘*In general, mature people can deal with the dark sides in their heart better.*’

The second group of the audience believes *Little Mouse* has many layers, so readers of different ages can find their own interest and interpretation. For example, Response E (British) suggests ‘*The book has so many surprises and high points I think it can be enjoyed by a wide age group.*’, and Response F (Taiwanese) thinks ‘*It is suitable for all ages. Everyone can be inspired in different ways.*’

The third group of test readers considered that *Little Mouse* is most suitable for young readers, such as Response N (British) mentions ‘*contains concepts which some children may not understand although may be good for inference skills.*’ Response P (British) believes ‘*lots of writing for young children and some dark illustrations but I think it would be interesting for 13/14 year olds.*’

Response E (British) provides a deeper response to my question. He writes, ‘*I think really young children (0-8) may struggle with some of the ideas, but I think the book offers so many different things many age groups would enjoy it. It starts as almost a kind of ancient Greek myth, then it developed into a sci-fi fantasy then ends with a rich emotional message. The illustrations did a fantastic job of conveying the world and character and made me feel invested in what was going on. The book has so many surprises and high points I think it can be enjoyed by a wide age group, but I would aim it at the 9-14 year old market.*’

Figure 4-24 shows a range of differences between British and Taiwanese: British respondents chose younger age group than the Taiwanese. This was a very interesting experiment, and these answers are full of surprises for me. At the exhibitions, I found that the first impressions of *Little Mouse* tended to be that it is aimed at children. I think the style of its character, and the stereotype of picture books as a children's medium caused visitors to assume this. The responses of visitor from different ages were quite different as well. For example, a girl about seven years old told me that she likes Little Mouse and Light Goblin. The teenagers were relatively less likely to express their ideas. The age group over 18 shows their keen interest in short animation. In the beginning, I assumed I was making an adult work for adult. But the very varied nature of the questionnaire responses is encouraging in another way: it confirms that *Little Mouse* does work on several levels at once. Otherwise, people would not have categorised its 'age-group' in such different ways.

4.2.2 Reporting

Through the exhibitions and the questionnaire, I verified some ideas from the research presented in Chapter Two. Also, most of the responses from the visitors and the responses, show that whether British or Taiwanese, people do understand *Little Mouse*. Some are interested in the exotic cultural elements, but nearly everyone can understand the ideas inside the story. The mise-en-scenes in *Little Mouse* received many positive responses. People like the scenes that contain hybrid elements from different cultures. So, the concept of interpreting multi-cultural elements in *Little Mouse* does attract attention, as an artist, these diverse sources helps me to enrich both ideas and visual interest in *Little Mouse*.

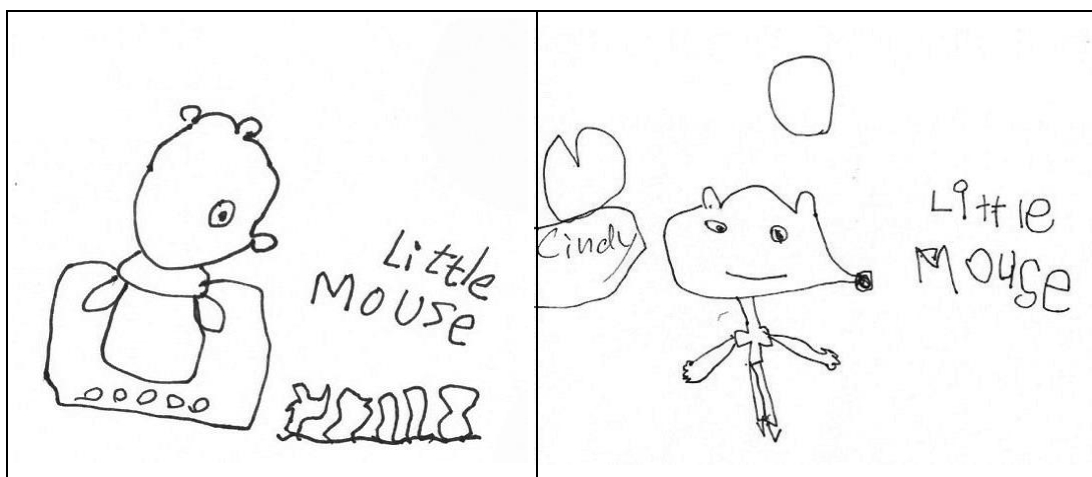


Figure 4-25
Feedback drawings of the children audiences, 2015

The second main task in this chapter is to test the potential audience for my picture book as an artwork. As Shaun Tan has said, *‘Picture books are very similar to short animations, or a typical painting exhibition (with about the same number of images), or an adult short story. It is just It happens that the vast majority of picture books are for young children, but I think this is just a cultural convention -. it varies from country to country ‘* (Ling, 2008, p. 45). From the exhibitions, I found that the potential audience of the picture book is not just made up of children, early adult to adult age groups also gave positive feedback. Of course, in the exhibitions, many children happily told me that he/she liked Little Mouse and even drew Little Mouse in my feedback. (Figure 4-25)

Clearly, the audience for picture books can be very wide, and it can become an interactive media for both child and adult. As Nikolajeva argued,

many of the works that have drawn the attention of critics fascinated by the dual-audience or cross-audience phenomenon offer opportunities for intricate analysis of narrative technique, perspective, symbolism, and characterization... picture books provide a special occasion for a collaborative relationship between children and adults, for picture-books empower children and adults much more equally. (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001, p. 261)

Even Salisbury, through focussed precisely on children's books pointed out that the postmodern picture book has as tendency attract all ages, and has become medium for both adults and children (2008, p. 32). In the Taiwan exhibition of *Little Mouse*, I did observe that many parents came with their children to read the picture book together. The picture book can become an intermediary between adults and children to experience the arts.

In the general direction of understanding the levels of *Little Mouse*, Taiwanese and British readers did not have huge differences. But more Taiwanese accepted the book as suitable for readers between 30 to 39; more than the British. There may be two reasons for this: first, it is related to the cultural and educational system in Asian. Asian students are not encouraged to explore the subjects not directly related to their study. Therefore, their time to reflect on self-psychological matters is delayed until they are in adulthood. The second possibility is, as the first chapter discussed, that the current reader age 30 to 39 in Taiwan grew up with cartoons and comics, therefore, this group has been nurtured on visual reading ability and shows more acceptance of the picture book as a cross-age medium. That might be the reason the picture books are seen as both for the younger population, and for adults in Taiwan. Furthermore, in the 2nd-annual Children's Book Summit, in New York City in September 2015, the book team of Nielsen² suggested that 'young at heart' is getting more crucial as potential supporters of young adult books, rather than the actual 'young' in age (Gilmore, 2015). Even the commercial industry research thus also supports my intention for this project, breaking the still common bias today of the picture book as mainly serving for younger readers.

²Nielsen's figures show that 80% of all the YA (young adults) books that are selling are being bought by adults.

4.3 Conclusion

This thesis has presented two main interlocked discussions: an approach to making a picture book and how a contemporary artist translates from cultural sources to a new picture book artwork.

First, the picture-book *Little Mouse* combines interacting multiple methods and research to approach my question around the place of negative emotion in life. Through this studio-art research, a feasible approach to the creation of a picture book is provided, including the transfer of different theories into a common idea, using existing artworks, literary and cinematic models from different cultures as stimulus for creation; it demonstrates the key processes behind the creation of *Little Mouse*. However, as Elkins argued, it is not the only possible approach (2004, p25). While this process comes from my reflection, it is first-hand data which reveals the black-box of my picture-book creation. I list my stages from 1 to 7 below. In stage 1 to stage 6, I experienced a back and forth dynamic creative process between narrative and image. This method is the main advantage for an artist taking the role of both author and illustrator to extend creativity, and makes the research ideas of the creator transparent.

Stage 1: Idea exploration

Stage 2: Material collect and transformation

Stage 3: Background Settings: fictional/ secondary world

Stage 4: Storyboard

Stage 5: Media

Stage 6: Design Picture Book

Stage 7: The audience

By triangulation -through exhibitions, feedback, workshop, action research- questionnaires, audiences both in Britain and Taiwan demonstrated a high degree of acceptance and understanding to the story and images of this project; they also recognised that *Little Mouse* was inspired by and achieved through cross-cultural elements. In fact, the readers show a commonality of understanding the parable-like messages. The ‘hybrid’ features seem to work well for the result. And the methodology was hybrid too, between practical-led research and practical-based research in this case, successfully to deliver my picture book artwork.

Second, regardless of the globalization, environmental impact, an artist is deeply shaped by culture: the artist’s native culture plays to a crucial degree, then this culture is hybridised with learning and experience. Culture is the resource of the artist. From this project, I learned how deeply creativity depends on how the artist deals with cultural sources, how to select and interpret from the reservoir of stories, imagery and ideas. The biggest challenge for a picture book creator is to adapt these creativities into a proper cultural transmission. I think *Little Mouse* reflects several characteristics of the contemporary picture book, including breaking or blurring boundaries between popular and high culture, giving up a single straight narrative, mixing real and fictional stories, inspired by multi-cultural sources, ending with ambiguity and openness, the outcome of self-reflection, and the feature of pluralism (Sipe and Pantaleo, 2008, pp. 3–5).

As a contemporary picture book artist, I have to face multicultural selection and reinterpretation, so the creation naturally contains characteristic hybridization. It could be a gift and challenge for an artist, if it is used well, it could break down ‘barriers between visual arts disciplines’, allow ‘hybrid forms to flourish’, and causes the evolution of artistic creation

(Abidin et al., 2013, p. 408). From my experience of the project of *Little Mouse*, I agree with Karen Coats's argument that the contemporary picture book is also a parable of 'the sense of an individual self' and introspection and self-reflexivity (Coats, 2008, pp. 77–78). Naturally, some of my life experience, thoughts and beliefs were transformed into the creation; in a certain degree, the picture book of *Little Mouse* crystallized the years I experienced looking into the forms of narrative and expression.

As an artist and a researcher at the same time, I have the privilege of exploring the minds of both sides. In my experience of this project, although creation and research interactively affect each other, many decisions and hidden meanings of the creation seemed clearer in the later stages of the research. The feature of 'blur' went through the whole creative process, literally and conceptually. For example, I did not deliberately manage it during the creation process, but it became obvious to me when I looked back from the position of researcher, the creative process of *Little Mouse* blurs the boundaries between reality and fiction. This reflects my personal psychological growth with *Little Mouse*. The picture book of *Little Mouse* embodies, explores and expresses the issues and beliefs of the artist.

There are several directions in which this research could be extended in further studies, for example, in the art education area. I consider that the visual thinking strategy might be a useful method to help artists in visual narrative creation. Also, the thoughtful meditation, or mindfulness of an artist while he/she interacts with printmaking is also an interesting topic to study more. Last, I hope this research serves as a case to inspire more experiments in the creation of visual arts.

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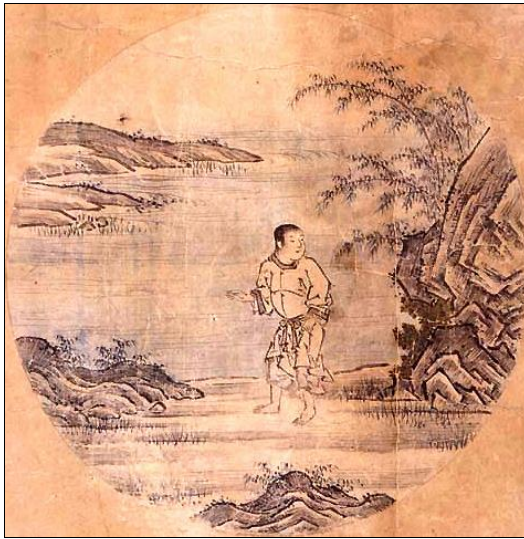
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Appendix

Appendix 1: My Interpretation of ‘Ten Cow Herding’

‘Ten Cow Herding’ (also known as *‘Ten Bulls’*) is a series of drawings to demonstrate the process of ‘enlightenment’ in Zen Buddhism, which usually accompanying short poems. Here I adopt the well-known version that created by Master Kuo-an (廓庵) in the middle of the 12th Century, then explain my interpretation of it and my reflection to picture-book *Little Mouse*.

Stage 1: Looking for the Cow



*'Alone in the wilderness, lost in the
jungle, he is searching, searching!*

*The swelling waters, far-away mountains,
and unending path;*

*Exhausted and in despair, he knows not
where to go,*

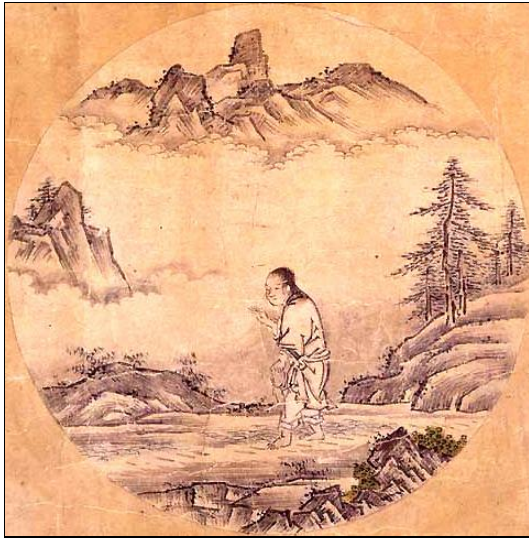
*He only hears the evening cicadas singing
in the maple-woods.'*¹

A human is lost in the woods, looks around and questions life. 'Who am I?' 'What kind of life do I want?' This man seems confused and wandering in the wood. The environment surrounding him is covered by many plants. Human beings in order to fit into the standards of society produce many Self-defence Mechanisms to make sure the self is appropriate.

However, some mechanisms become obstacles and blind the way for humans to find the truth of life. As in the drawing, the truth of life hides behind the jungle. Human nature has never disappeared. However, the outside world is full of temptations, covering the truth. Although this man tries very hard to search in his nature, he still cannot find the path. (Wang (王), 2006, p. 23) This stage inspired me to narrate the beginning of the story. Little Mo use travels to many places and got lost in the questions of what his shadow is.

¹ 「茫茫撥草去追尋，水闊山遙路更深。力盡神疲無處覓，但聞楓樹晚蟬吟。」

Stage2: Seeing the Traces of the Cow



*'By the water, under the trees, scattered
are the traces of the lost:*

*Fragrant woods are growing thick- did he
find the way?*

*However remote, over the hills, and far
away, the cow may wander;*

*Her nose reaches the heavens and none
can conceal it.'*²

Stage 2 and 3 can be classified as the discovery period. People start to find out that they lost the cow. The cow here can be regarded as the metaphor of thy nature, the stereotype, the Self-defense Mechanism, or the unacceptable unconscious. Although living in the surrounding of the temptations, he starts can tell the environment he belongs. Therefore, the cow-herd can hear the nature calling from the inner voice of searching cow. I applied this idea in my story and elaborated the calling from the inner monster. I transferred it as that Little Mouse still cannot see his shadow, but he can hear someone summoning. Although he may refuse this calling and run away, but he cannot escape from his destiny.

² 「水邊林下跡偏多，芳草離披見也麼？縱是深山更深處，遼天鼻孔怎藏他？」

Stage 3: Seeing the Cow



*'Yonder perching on a branch a nightingale
sings cheerfully;*

*The sun is warm, the soothing breeze blows
through the willows green on the bank;*

*The cow is there all by herself, nowhere is
there room to hide herself;*

*The splendid head decorated with stately
horns, what painter can reproduce her? ³*

In this stage, the cow-herd sees the trial of the cow. Here, 'Ten Cow Herding', used seeing the cow as a metaphor to describe the cow-herd opening his mind and accepting the destiny to search the cow. When the cow-herd turns his attitude toward observing the world, everything changes. The obstacles will not block the path to search the cow. Instead, these difficulties become the advantages for the cow-herd to explore the cow. In my point of view, the cow-herd's attitude change seems too quickly. Perhaps there should be more mental struggle and then, the cow-herd makes his decision to chase the cow. I am particular what happens during the process that makes the cow-herd changing his thought. Therefore, I focus on working on the process to the idea changing of my *Little Mouse*'s story.

³ 「黃鸝枝上一聲聲，日暖風和岸柳青。只此更無回避處，森森頭角畫難成。」

Stage 4: Catching the Cow



*'With the energy of his whole soul, he has
at last taken hold of the cow:*

*But how wild her will, ungovernable her
power!*

At times she struts up a plateau,

*When lo! She is lost in a misty
unpenetrable mountain-pass.⁴*

From the stage 4 to 6, it can be classed as the process of learning to tame the cow. This stage describes that human's nature is like the cow, hard to be tamed. For example, if people would like to change a bad habit. They require facing it directly and forcing themselves alter it. As the picture showing, they confront with each other. Although the cow-herd already gets the cow, this cow still fights with him. Sometimes the cow-hard seems taking the advantage. Suddenly, the situation change upside down.

In the second version of my story, I tried to add this element in it, but I found fighting seems not enough to express my ideal relationship between Little Mouse and his shadow. So I took the relationship between Goo and his shadow monster, and comparing with Moon-cat and its shadow monster to reveal two opposite case studies for *Little Mouse* in the final version. The process of debating the shadow is closer to the ideal way to approach the inner monster and to explore the nature.

⁴ 「竭盡神通獲得渠，心強力壯卒難除。有時纔到高原上，又入煙雲深處居。」

Stage 5: Herding the Cow



'Never let yourself be separated from the whip and the tether;

Lest she should wander away into a world of defilement:

When she is properly tended, she will grow pure and docile,

Even without chain, nothing binding, she will by herself follow you.⁵

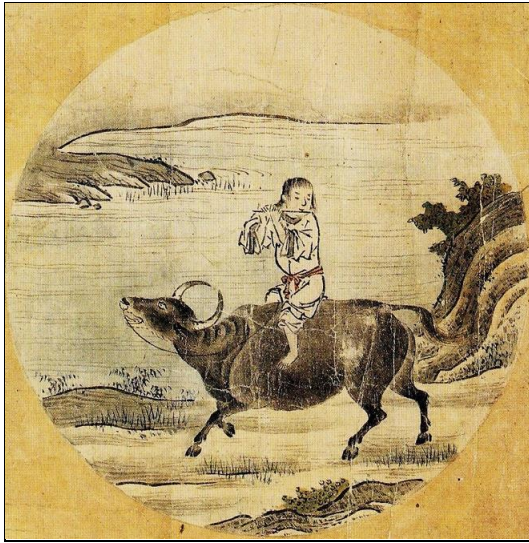
This stage indicates the process of how the cow-herd tamed the cow. After taming the cow, the cow-herd still cannot relax. Except finding the way to tame the cow, he also needs to keep attention maintaining this balance. Like the picture drawing, the cow-herd takes a whip and a rope on his hand. The whip is the symbolic of awareness. The rope is like the standard of the discipline. Both of it are the equipment for this cow-herd to keep rethink and remind himself.⁶

In the stage 4 to 5, Kuo-an use cow-herd and cow as a metaphor of mental fighting. I take this idea transferring to a form of communication between Little Mouse and the little inner monster. I believe that through the dialogue to exchange each of the thoughts, the inner monster's voice will be listened. The possibility of ease the confliction will be actuated by this mental negotiation.

⁵ 「鞭索時時不離身，恐伊縱步入埃塵。相將牧得純和也，羈鎖無抑自逐人。」

⁶ Ng Yu-kwan, 'The Practice and Ultimate Concern of the Ten Ox-herding Pictures and Verses', *Chung-Hwa Buddhism Journal*, 4 (1991), p. 320.

Stage 6: Coming Home on the Cow's Back



'Riding the cow he leisurely wends his way home:

Enveloped in the evening mist, how tunelessly the flute vanishes away!

Singing a ditty, beating time, his heart is filled with a joy indescribable!

That he is now one of those who know, need it be told?'⁷

This stage declares the end of conflict between the cow and cow-herd. In the same time, it also symbolizes the ending struggle of people's inner heart. The contrary clash all passes and the journey turns back peacefully. There is no more need to keep alert watch the cow. The cow-herd can enjoy the trip with the cow.

⁷ 「騎牛迤邐欲還家，羌笛聲聲送晚霞。一拍一歌無限意，知音何必鼓唇牙。」

Stage 7: The Cow Forgotten, Leaving the Man Alone



'Riding on the cow he is at last back in his home,

Where lo! there is no more the cow, and how serenely he sits all alone!

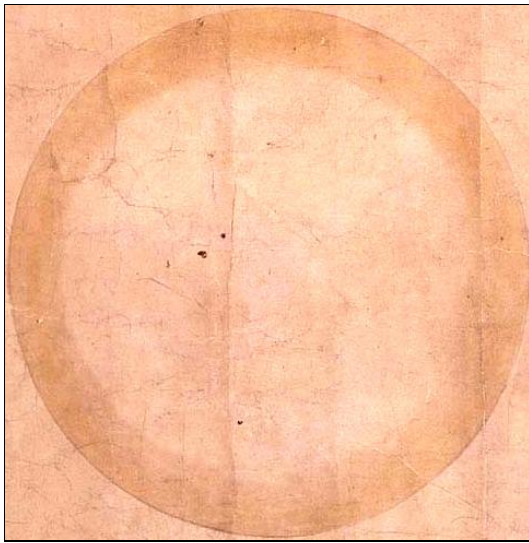
Though the red sun is high up in the sky, he seems to be still quietly asleep,

Under a straw-thatched roof are his whip and rope idly lying beside him.⁸

In the stage 7, it returns from the beginning. The cow-herd comes home and the cow is involved inside him. The home here symbolizes the starting. The beginning of life is complete, no diverse, no conflict and no distinguish. All opposites are over. It is an extreme pure period. This is a new idea of image for me. The cow-herd comes home and the cow disappears. It is a process of life purification. (Ng Yu-kwan, 1991b, p. 322) I put this idea into Moon-cat and his inner monster. After integrating with own shadow, Moon-cat reborn and the inner monster contains inside his heart.

⁸ 「騎牛已得到家山，牛也空兮人也閑。紅日三竿猶作夢，鞭繩空頓草堂間。」

Stage 8: The Cow and the Man Both Gone out Sight



*'All is empty, the whip, the rope, the man,
and the cow:*

*Who has ever surveyed the vastness of
heaven?*

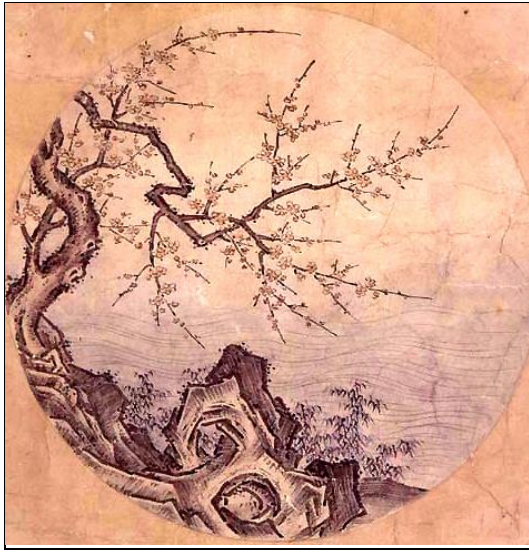
*Over the furnace burning ablaze, not a
flake of snow can fall:*

*When this state of things obtains, manifest
is the spirit of the ancient master.⁹*

The picture of 8 stage is very interesting. No more cow or human shows on this stage, which also can be regarded as there is not any subjective conscious inside. An empty circle means everything or nothing. It can be seen as a life beginning, or an end. It is infinity, a universal.

⁹ 「鞭索人牛盡屬空，碧天遼闊信難通。紅爐焰上爭容雪，到此方能合祖宗。」

Stage 9: Returning to the Origin, Back to the Source



'To return to the Origin, to be back at the Source- already a false step this!

Far better it is to stay home, blind and deaf, straightway and without much ado,

Sitting within the hut he takes no cognizance of things outside,

Behold the water flowing on- whither nobody knows; and those flowers red and fresh- for whom are they?'¹⁰

The master Kuo-an believes that the evolution should have to reborn and go back to benefit the society. Therefore, Kuo-an's 'Ten Cow-herding' add two more stage. The stage 9 describes a reborn. After experiencing the above stages' practice, people start to appreciate the tree, the flower, the river and everything. Each of life has their own special feature. No matter what it is, people can embrace it and live with it peaceful.

¹⁰ 「返本還源已費功，爭如直下若盲聾。庵中不見庵前物，水自茫茫花自紅。」

Stage 10: Entering the City with Bliss-bestowing Hands



*'Bare-chested and bare-footed, he comes
out into the market-place;*

*Daubed with mud and ashes, how broadly
he smiles!*

*There is no need for the miraculous power
of the gods,*

*For he touches, and lo! The dead trees
come into full bloom.'*¹¹

This final stage depicts the terminal life expression. The attitude of life requires to concerns others and makes connections with others, including animals and natures. The world becomes a stage for people to show the value of self. This concept affects my setting of the final scene of Moon-cat, to do the good thing for the world. I imaged that after his inner monster blasting, he needs to do something to benefit the city, even this action may hurt himself.

¹¹ 「露胸跣足入廛來，抹土塗灰笑滿腮。不用神仙真祕訣，直教枯木放花開。」

Appendix 2: My Process of Making Stone Lithography

Step 1) Preparing: Making the smooth surface of my stone

1-1) Clearing out the water on the surface of the stone



1-2) Putting the carborindum on the stone



1-3) Grinding it as a circle route



This is the first step to create a nice and smooth surface of the stone for the texture preparing.

Usually, I will start from 80 carborundum three times, 120 carborundum one time and final add 180 carborundum one time to make sure the surface is perfect. I found that if I want to acquire a nice and smooth surface, it should be less the water on the stone before each section of the grinding.

Step 2) Drawing: Making the water ink with water and put it dry naturally

2-1) Drop the water in the middle of water ink



2-2) Use water's flow creating a special pattern



2-3) The complete image and leave it dry naturally



I had tried many different materials to apply on the surface of the stone and found out that the water ink is the only one can make the texture I like. The most importantly is that the water and the water ink keep involving each other after apply on the stone, therefore, I put some water push away the water ink and make some wave-like texture, and vice versa continuously until I satisfied. Then, leave it and wait to dry naturally.

Step 3) Etch: The timing control

3-1) The different number of Gum



3-2) Put the pure gum over the surface of the stone



3-3) Use the hands to move the pure gum at least 15 minutes



3-4) Use brush with gum to acid the place too dark



This is the most important process of creating the texture I like. Basically, I need to do twice etch to make sure I gain the texture I want. The timing and the number of etch plays the decisive outcome. Normally, I used pure Gum to etch the whole surface for 15 minutes and move on number 5 to apply on the place dark 20-30 seconds. After that, if there has darker one and I do not like, I will apply number 10 or 15 for 20 seconds to etch. Then, after making the

image is what I want, I put the pure gum again covering the whole surface again and finish my process of etch. Noticing that each of stone has different personality, therefore, depending on what stone you got and make a slightly adjust of the number of etch.

Step 4) Ink making and Printing

4-1) Prepare the ink materials



4-2) Mix the ink with magnesium carbonate



4-3) Get a little sticky ink



4-4) Place the ink and roll it up



In order to capture the sensitive texture, the ideal proportion of ink making for me is half black and half transparent ink with the same size of ink of magnesium carbonate. I will check the ink by watching its speed of flowing and make sure the quality of ink. Then, go on printing process.

4-5) Place the ink on the stone



4-6) Damp the paper



4-7) Prepare to print

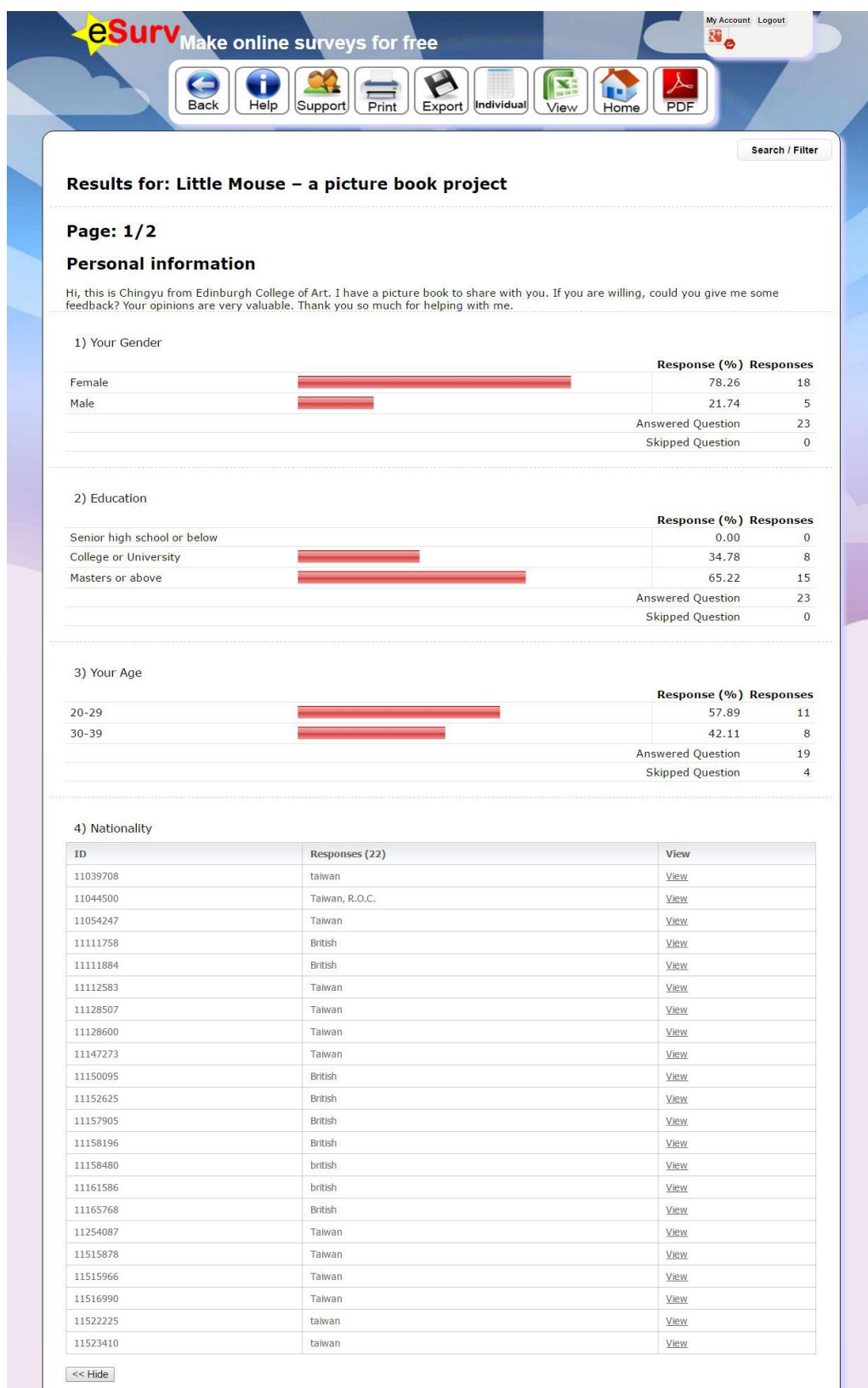


4-8) Printing



The process of printing follows the normal standard. Only needing to mention is the timing of wet the paper and the speed of rolling the printing machine. South bank smooth is always the best paper for hunting my texture, because it provides a nice and soft surface to capture the ink and combine with my lower speed of rolling to get the maxima possible for the fine texture.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Feedbacks



Little Mouse reader's feedback

5) Which part of the content of Little Mouse do you like? (tick all that apply)

		Response (%)	Responses
Plot		32.26	10
Character		32.26	10
Scene		35.48	11
		Answered Question	14
		Skipped Question	9







Respondent ID	View Survey	Other
11111884	View	The book is a wonderful hybrid, with elements of early religious fable and science fiction with a cute art style that works as a nice contrast to some of the books darker material.

6) Which part of the design of Little Mouse do you like? (tick all that apply)

		Response (%)	Responses
Cover		25.00	6
Illustrations		58.33	14
Graphic design		16.67	4
		Answered Question	15
		Skipped Question	8

Respondent ID	View Survey	Other
11111884	View	Although the story is dark the illustrations are still warm and inviting, it is a great way to draw the reader into the world of Little Mouse, especial for younger readers.

7) Which character do you like most in Little Mouse?

		Response (%)	Responses
Little Mouse		21.05	4
Shadow Monster		15.79	3
Mr. Wolf		5.26	1
Mooncat		15.79	3
Goo		31.58	6
Light Goblin		10.53	2
		Answered Question	15
		Skipped Question	8

Respondent ID	View Survey	Please explain which is you favourite and give your reasoning.
11054247	View	all characyer are development from little mouse, a delusion
11111884	View	As soon as I open the character page at the start of the book I loved the look of Goo, his furry and sweet face make for a memorable character design. I like his role in the story too as he is a little mysterious, but still acts as a kind of mentor for Little Mouse.
11152625	View	Because he stepped into the unknown and was very brave
11157905	View	He gave a solution to the problem.
11158196	View	They were all a bit unrelatable
11158480	View	He is stuck in his ways. His traumatic past led him to believe in the shadow monster
11165768	View	He helps little mouse and is a good friend
11254087	View	Mooncat is my favourite because one of the paintings that I liked the most was the one with Mooncat.
11516990	View	I like the little mouse because readers can project themselves in. I like shadow monsters because I always like things mostly forgot or ignore from people. I like Goo because Goo is a very nice person who are willing to help. I like light goblin because they are beautiful. I feel sad about two other character.
11523410	View	shadow monster is like a part inside everyone

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8) Which part of the picture book of Little Mouse do you feel is not easily understood?

ID	Responses (13)	View
11523410	all are easily understood	View
11516990	Not hard to understand the whole storyline	View
11254087	The reason why Mooncat has to be locked up and regarding the light festival.	View
11165768	none	View
11158480	At first I was led to believe that the shadow monster was just going to be a think that the little mouse made up but on further reading g it seemed like this was more of an old factual tale within the non factual tale.	View
11158196	The plot is somewhat confused and introduced too many new concepts	View
11157905	Where everything came from.	View
11152625	I got a little confused when he was talking about the shadow monsters and the effect they have on the world and how they only live for so long but can kill you and speak to you.	View
11111884	Some of the background lore for the main story might be a little hard for very young reads to follow, but I think they would understand enough to follow the main story.	View
11054247	none of it. quite clear, it express the author's point of view.	View
11044500	none.	View
11039708	none	View
11037822	The history of Light City	View

9) Which concept or concepts you think that Little Mouse is trying to deliver?(tick all that apply)

	Response (%)	Responses
Redemption	11.43	4
Love	17.14	6
Respect	14.29	5
Acceptance	34.29	12
Challenge	17.14	6
Hospitality	5.71	2
Answered Question		15
Skipped Question		8

Respondent ID	View Survey	Other
11054247	View	turn to nature, peace
11111884	View	This my fall under Challenge, but I think the book teaches you never to take things at face value and to question what is going on in the world around you.
11157905	View	Depression
11158480	View	confidence

10) What you think that the Shadow Monster may be represent in the real world?

ID	Responses (15)	View
11037822	Sad emotion	View
11039708	the wound or damage of life	View
11044500	The dark side of the society, such as seven sins	View
11054247	misunderstand of nature	View
11111884	The duality in all of us. We all have competing thoughts and feelings, I think the Shadow Monsters are the manifestation of the thoughts and feeling we repress without first trying to understand them.	View
11112583	The dark side of human beings	View
11128600	Negative feelings that stock in the deep soul and never be relised.	View
11152625	Inner demons, your own fears	View
11157905	Conscience.	View
11158196	Depression	View
11158480	overcoming fear. anxiety	View
11165768	The evil inside everyone	View
11254087	Everyone's inner evil.	View
11516990	Multiple Personality, Id, Ego and Super Ego	View
11523410	fear	View

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11) Do you feel any issues have been discussed in Little Mouse?

ID	Responses (15)	View
11037822	A life journey	View
11039708	shadow , needs,challenge	View
11044500	Yes, the friendship and relationship.	View
11054247	conscious which effects the reality, but it's all delusion	View
11111884	The duality of humanity (see answer above) and the importance of accepting yourself as a whole. Being vigilant of the world around you and remembering the importance of questioning the things you are told.	View
11112583	Courage and fear	View
11128600	People care about what public think of them and forgot to listen to the inner of themselves.	View
11152625	Learning how to do things on your own, asking for help, learning to accept death, trust, taking risks	View
11157905	Accepting what you cannot change.	View
11158196	Yes but I do not think the concepts have been properly communicated	View
11158480	anxiety	View
11165768	drug use, tolerance	View
11254087	Using outside force to regulate one's mind possibly doesn't work well.	View
11516990	yes	View
11523410	yes	View

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12) Which category of literature do you suggest that Little Mouse can be put in? (tick all that apply)

	Response (%)	Responses
Psychology	54.17	13
Science fiction	8.33	2
Politic	0.00	0
Philosophy	37.50	9
Answered Question		15
Skipped Question		8

Respondent ID	View Survey	Other
11037822	View	picture book
11111884	View	Fantasy or even dystopia fantasy.
11158480	View	children's

13) If you would like to share Little Mouse with others, which age groups you would consider to share with? (tick all that apply)

	Response (%)	Responses
0-12	19.05	8
13-19	28.57	12
20-29	26.19	11
30-39	19.05	8
Above 40	7.14	3
Answered Question		15
Skipped Question		8

Respondent ID	View Survey	Please explain which you choose and give your reasoning.
11037822	View	It can apply to any age.
11039708	View	it's suit for everyone who willing to deal with his own issue and to face the positive change.
11044500	View	Every age group will be benefited in different aspects.
11054247	View	because above 20years old are searching external desire, who cannot face the vaule of the self.
11111884	View	I think really young children (0-8) may struggle with some of the ideas, but I think the book offers so many different things many age groups would enjoy it. It start as almost a kind of ancient Greek myth, then it developed into a sci-fi fantasy then ended with a rich emotional message. The illustrations did a fantastic job of conveying the world and character and made me feel invested in what was going on. The book has so many surprises and high points I think it can be enjoyed by a wide age group, but I would aim it at the 9-14 year old market.
11112583	View	It is suitable for all ages. Everyone can be inspired by different ways.
11152625	View	I found the story quite deep and dark and it would not suit younger ages as it discusses death and is quite creepy"
11157905	View	It deals with older subjects in an accessible way.
11158196	View	I do not think older audiences would engage with the concepts nor younger understand them
11158480	View	higher end of this age group due to the explanations which take place.writing is in small font and contains concepts which some children may not understand although may be good for inference skills
11165768	View	Lots of writing for young children and some dark illustrations but I think it would be interesting for 13/14 year olds
11254087	View	This story is probably kind of dark for very young children, but for people older than that, they can surely see something that they can identify with in the story.
11523410	View	In general, mature people can deal with the dark sides in their heart better

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